

1826
1827
1830
185 MINUTES

OF THE

PEARL RIVER

BAPTIST CONVENTION,

CONVENED AT

DILLINGS-CREEK CHURCH,

MARION COUNTY—STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE THIRTY-FIRST MARCH, 1820.

MONTICELLO:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM EVANS.

1820.

PURSUANT to a
their last session,
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said resolution, w

CHURCHES.

Mount Nebo,

Pentecost—The

Pearl River, } C
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Half-Moon Fluff

Bethany—Willi

Silver Creek—N

Providence—NO

Fair-River—Sha

Dillings-Creek,

Poplar Spring,

Chapel, } ABS
 } Hay

Antioch, } JAM
 } Davi

Those marked thus,

MINUTES, &c.

FRIDAY, 31st MARCH, 1820.

PURSUANT to a Resolution of the Mississippi Baptist Association, their last session, authorizing a Convention to be held at Dillings-Creek Church, the said Convention met according to the appointment said resolution, when the following Churches were represented—viz.

CHURCHES.

DELEGATES.

Mount Nebo, } Johanna Ricks,
 } John Tate.*

Pentecost—Thomas Watts.

Pearl River, } GEO. W. KING,
 } Harman Runnels,

Half-Moon Fluff—NATHAN MORRIS.

Bethany—William Stamps.

Silver Creek—Nathan Parker,

Providence—NORVEL ROBERTSON.

Fair-River—Shadrach King.

Dillings-Creek, } Dougle Graham,
 } William Ward.

Poplar Spring, } JOHN P. MARTIN,
 } Noah Stringer.

Chapel, } AB SOLEM HARPER,*
 } Hayden Tillman.

Antioch,* } JAMES THIGPEN,
 } Davis B. Jenkins.

Those marked thus, (*) were absent.

1st. By request of the Dillings-
preached a sermon, introductory
"There remains yet, very much to be possessed."

2d. Brother Norvel Robertson gave an exhortation, and prayed.

3d. Proceeded to business.

4th. Read the letters from the Churches, and enrolled the names of their Delegates.

5th. Chose brother Norvel Robertson, Moderator, and brother Geo. W. King, Clerk.

6th. Resolved, That it is expedient, for the convenience of the Churches, to petition the Mississippi Baptist Association for a dismission, and that a new Association be formed on Pearl River.

7th. Resolved, That it be recommended to the Churches, not represented in this Convention, and that I wish to join our contemplated Association, to petition, individually to the Mississippi Baptist Association, at the next session, for their dismission, for the purpose of being constituted with us.

8th. Appointed a committee of brethren Geo. W. King, Norvel Robertson, and Harman Runnels, to write a petitionary letter to the next Mississippi Baptist Association, praying for a dismission from their body, for the purpose of organizing the contemplated new Association; and that they request ministering brethren to assist in that important business.

9th. Appointed the brethren W. M. Cooper, Nathan Morris, and Geo. W. King, to be a committee to draught a plan of a Constitution to be presented to the first Pearl River Baptist Association, for inspection.

10th. Brother Moderator prayed, and the Convention adjourned until to-morrow 10 o'clock, A. M.

SATURDAY, April, 1820.

Met according to adjournment.

11th. Brethren Norvel Robertson and Nathan Morris, preached.

Proceeded to business.

12th. The committee, appointed to prepare the petitionary letter, presented it, which was read and approved.

13th. Appointed to write a letter to the next

14th. Resolved, That the Church, in Pike county, in September next, the following brethren be invited

15th. Appointed to preach at Fair River Church, before the first Lord's day

16th. Appointed to be presented to the

17th. Appointed to preach a sermon at the coming of failure, brother

18th. Appointed to be inserted in these William Cooper, C

19th. Appointed to be distributed of

20th. Concluded

On the Sabbath, Geo. W. King, preached the word (we hope) well

Signed

13th. Appointed brother Nathan Morris to bear and present the above letter to the next Mississippi Baptist Association.

14th. Resolved, That we appoint an Union Meeting, at Chapel Church, in Pike county, to commence on Friday before the first sabbath in September next; to be a Communion Season, and that the ministering brethren be invited to attend.

15th. Appointed the first Pearl River Baptist Association to be held at Fair River Church, Lawrence county, to commence on the Saturday before the first Lord's day in November next.

16th. Appointed brother Geo. W. King to write a Circular Letter, to be presented to the first Pearl River Baptist Association, for acceptance.

17th. Appointed brother James Thigpen to preach the introductory sermon at the commencement of the aforesaid Association; and in case of failure, brother Norvel Robertson.

18th. Appointed brother Shadrach King to write an Address to be inserted in these minutes, subject to the inspection of the brethren William Cooper, Geo. W. King, and Harman Runnels.

19th. Appointed brother Geo. W. King to superintend the printing and distributing of 400 copies of these Minutes.

20th. Concluded by prayer.

On the Sabbath the brethren Jesse Danson, Nathan Morris, and Geo. W. King, preached to a very attentive congregation; and the word (we hope) was attended with the energy of the HOLY SPIRIT.

Signed by order of the Convention,

NORVEL ROBERTSON, *Moderator.*

GEO. W. KING, *Clerk.*

THE PEARL RIVER BAPTIST CONVENTION, TO THE
CHURCHES THEY REPRESENT, SENDETH GREETING:

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE beneficence of our God has caused the incense of gratitude to rise in grateful odours from the past our delightful country was a land of wild men of the woods, and wild beasts, scarcely more than landscapes; our temperate, unclouded atmosphere, wore no smiles for them. They scarcely saw the face of God inscribed in the Heavens, or heard his voice in the thunders. Their minds presented a constant scene of violence, when polluted by every abominable and senseless vice. But our covenant God has made the wilderness, to him as the rose. The rolling, silent current of the beautiful river has responded the voice of the worshipers of the Most High, and a number of his Churches are planted in its vicinity. In consideration of these high privileges we should glorify God in our bodies and spirits, which are his. We recollect His goodness, who hath vouchsafed us an inheritance among our brethren. Our hearts burned together when the first Churches were established among us; but has not the gold become dim? Have you forgotten the day of your espousals, and are you not ready to say, "Where is God, my Saviour, that hidest under the hidings of the face of Him who hath made the sun and moon, and do the dark and chilling clouds of adversity intercept the rays of the sun of righteousness? To you we would raise our voice, as your God is married unto you". In your examination into the causes of your not rendered to Him the honor due, have been too solicitous for worldly desires; but sent leanness to your souls, is an abominable idolatry.

When the lowering storm of war clouded our horizon, we cried mightily to God—He heard our cry, our landscapes smiled, and the birds sang in our valleys. Our seas were smoothed, and the commercial sails sent by the four winds to our happy land. Peace and affluence reigned in our families; but alas! amidst these blessings we have forgotten our God; and loved the gift, without remembering the Giver. Let us then, stand upon our watch, and watch to see what the Lord will answer when we are reproved. Let us bemoan ourselves as Ephraim, and abhor ourselves as Job. Let us be the Son, while his wrath is but a little kindled.

For the purpose of drinking, and the snuffing, offer to you a few

1st. Private prayer. And remember, his face in a little while, with his loving kindness, in love, hides the

2d. In former times, another, and the same was written before, shall be mine, say, Go, and do like unto the door-posts of the house, how goodly are the works of God, is more neglected. News of his grace, once bid fair for the Churches! O! families, and in our

Wait, dear brethren, his promise. We will not the assembling, Wait on the Lord, and he will strengthen

May the sun of righteousness, and bless the prayer of your people

For the purpose of your returning to those waters of which you have drank, and the smiles of that God, whom you have offended, we shall offer to you a few directions :

1st. Private prayer, that much neglected duty, should be resumed. And remember, that although your God may not hear *at first*, and hide his face in a little wrath, yet he will remember his importuning children with his loving kindness. Jesus has a *compassionate heart*, and often, *in love*, hides the bright shinings of his countenance.

2d. In former times those that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord harkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him for those that thought on his name: and they shall be mine, saith the Lord, when I come to make up my *jewels*.—*Go, and do likewise*. Call to mind those golden days when the very *door-posts* of the house of God appeared beautiful. Did we not say, how goodly are thy tents O! Jacob? But is it so, that the house of God is more neglected; his ordinances, apparently, dispised; the good news of his grace but lightly esteemed, and that too by those who have once bid fair for the Kingdom? O! for a revival of religion among the Churches! O! for a revival in our hearts, in our brethren, in our families, and in our neighbourhoods!!

Wait, dear brethren, on the Lord in his appointed means.—Stay upon his promise. Wrestle like Jacob—overcome like Israel. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, even in *prayer meetings*. Wait on the Lord, and he will renew thy strength. Be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy heart.

May the sun of righteousness illumine your minds; vegetate your piety, and bless these considerations to the good of your souls, is the prayer of your poor brethren.

NORVEL ROBERTSON, *Moderator*.

GEO. W. KING, *Clerk*.

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MINUTES

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST

Association,

Constituted at Fair River Church,

LAURENCE COUNTY, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE SIXTH OF NOVEMBER, 1820.

MONTICELLO:

PRINTED BY P. ISLER

1820.

AGREEABLY
and the Pearl River
at Fair River Church
pursuance to the
were represented,

CHURCHES.

✓ Half Moon Bluff.
✓ Bougchitto.
✓ Mount Nebo.
✓ Antioch.
✓ Pearl River.
✓ Union.
✓ Fair River.
✓ Silver Creek.
✓ New Chapel.
✓ Poplar Spring.
✓ Dillings Creek.
✓ Baileychitto.
✓ Silver Creek East
✓ of Pearl River.
✓ Bulah.
✓ Friendship.
✓ Sweet Water Branch.
✓ Talleyhala.
✓ Providence.
✓ Penticost.
✓ African.
✓ Bethany.
✓ Ebenezer.
✓ Bahala.

N. B. Those marked
with *—Licenced preachers

MINUTES, &c.

SATURDAY, 4th November, 1820.

AGREEABLY to sundry Resolutions of the Mississippi Baptist Association, and the Pearl River Baptist Convention, appointing an Association to be constituted at Fair River Church, the Delegates from the Churches met at the said Church in pursuance to the appointment of the said resolutions, when the following Churches were represented, viz.

CHURCHES.	DELEGATES.	Total in Fellowship.	Contributed to pay for minutes.	For the Association Fund.	
		\$	C.	\$	C.
Half Moon Bluff.	NATHAN MORRIS,				
	William Magee,	24	1 00	3 00	
Bougechitto.	WILLIAM COOPER,				
	David Cleveland,	40	1 25	3 75	
Mount Nebo.	Johannan Ricks,				
	John Tate,	28	1 00	2 00	
Antioch.	WILLIAM WHITEHEAD,				
	JAMES THIIGPEN,	38	1 00	0 50	
Pearl River.	GEORGE W. KING,				
	William D. Hathorn,	28	2 00	3 00	
Union.	Joseph Lewis,				
	James Chamberlain,	22	1 50	3 00	
	Shadrach King,				
Fair River.	Jesse Maxwell,	61	3 00	5 50	
Silver Creek.	Willis Simmons,	21	1 00	0 50	
	ABSALOM HARPER,				
New Chapel.	Moses Bridges,	41	1 00	2 75	
	JOHN P. MARTIN,				
Poplar Spring.	Noah Stringer,	48	2 12 1-2	1 00	
	Dougle Graham,				
Dillings Creek.	John Barnes,	27	1 50	2 00	
Baileychitto.	WILLIAM COOK,	10	0 75	0 75	
Silver Creek East	John Nall,				
of Pearl River.	David Hubert,	23	2 00	3 00	
	DAVID COOK,*				
Bulah.	John Sutton,	10	0 50	0 50	
	Charles Walker,				
Friendship.	Reuben Williams,	30	1 37 1-2		
	ASA CHADICK,*				
Sweet Water Branch	Thomas Carter,	15	1 00	1 00	
Talleyhala.	JAMES POWEL,				
	Jesse Scrivner,	47	2 00	2 00	
Providence.	NORVEL ROBERTSON,				
	James C. Steele,	25	2 00	1 00	
Pentecost.	Briton Bridges,				
	Thomas Watts,	18	1 25	1 00	
African.	Ben, belonging to Sellers,				
	Bob, belonging to M'Graw,	30	0 12 1-2	0 87 1-2	
Bethany.	William Sparks,				
	William Stamps,	22	2 00	1 00	
Ebenezer.	Jacob Carter,				
	Esau Bass,	21	1 50	0 75	
Bahala.	James Bailey,				
	Bailey Lovan,	19	0 50	0 50	
TOTAL.		648	51 87 1-2	39 37 1-2	

N. B. Those marked thus * (Asterisk) were absent—Ordained Ministers in Capitals—Licenced preachers in Italics.

1st. Brother James Thigpen, accordingly to appointment, preached the introductory sermon, from 1st. Peter, II. 5. *"Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."*

2nd. Proceeded to business, and nominated brother Norvel Robertson, Moderator pro. tem. and brethren, Shadrach King, and Davis Collins, Clerks pro. tem.

3rd. Read the letters from the Churches, and enrolled the names of their delegates.

Adjourned until Monday at half past nine o'clock, A. M. By appointment of the Fair River Church, on the Lord's day, the brethren, Ezra Courtney, Samuel Marsh, and Davis Collins, preached to a large, serious, and solemn congregation. (Many of the hearts of God's people rejoiced to hear the wonderful displays of Divine grace opened, and enforced, while some sinners let fall the penitential tear, and others appeared seriously solemn.) Divine service was closed, by brother John Smith, in a very pathetic exhortation, and prayer by brother George W. King.

MONDAY, 6th November, 1820

Met agreeably to adjournment.

Brother Robertson prayed.

4th. The brethren, Ezra Courtney, John Smith, and Samuel Marsh, messengers from the Mississippi Association, and the brethren, Daniel M'Call and John Burch, messengers from the Union Association, together with the ministering brethren present, not delegated, were invited to seats with us, to aid in the transaction of business.

5th. Enquired into the fellowship and union of the Churches, and a difficulty arising relative to the orderly stand of the Bahala Church, the delegates of said Church were set aside until after the Constitution.

6th. The committee appointed by the Pearl River Baptist Convention, to draught a plan of a constitution, reported the same, which being deliberately read, and some alterations made, the question was taken on adopting the report of the committee, as amended, which was carried unanimously in the affirmative.

7th. Brother Robertson, the Moderator pro. tem. then gave the delegates the right-hand of fellowship, and pronounced them "THE PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, united in love to God and to one another;" and brother John Smith offered up the dedicatory prayer.

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14th. Read

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8th. Choose brother William Cooper, Moderator, and brother Shadrach King, Clerk.

9th. Took up the case of the Bahala Church, and the objection against said Church appearing to be in consequence of their holding brother James Bailey in fellowship, who (report said) had two wives living, and the subject being thoroughly investigated, the Association pronounced the *first marriage not consummated*, and therefore *illegal*, and the *second marriage, valid*; and the Bahala Church was received by an *unanimous vote*.

10th. Brother George W. King having prepared the CIRCULAR LETTER, accordingly to the appointment of the PEARL RIVER BAPTIST CONVENTION, presented it, which was read, and unanimously adopted.

11th. Received a letter of correspondence from the Union Association, together with a present of sixteen copies of their *maia, Fair River, Doughnutto and New Chapel*, *light-hand* experienced in different degrees, the outpouring of the Spirit.— This evinces to us the pleasing fact, that our *Covenant God* has not yet forgotten to be gracious. We likewise hear of the *most gracious visitations* of the churches in New-York, Vir-
ginia, brother Nathan Morris brother Shadrach King, to the Union, Associations.

Brother Davis Collins prayed, and the Association adjourned until to-morrow at half past nine o'clock, A. M.

TUESDAY, 1th November, 1820.

Met in pursuance to adjournment.

Brother Nathan Morris prayed.

13th. *Resolved*, That this Association, feeling a wish to disseminate the true doctrines of the Gospel in their purity, request our Reverend and beloved brother, DAVIS COLLINS, to favour us with a copy of the sermon which he delivered to us on Lord's day last, and that brother William Whitehead superintend the printing of 500 copies of it; and, that he appropriate the money of the subscription raised for that purpose, towards the printing of the same, and that he distribute them to the subscribers proportionate to the sum that each subscribes, so that the ultimate distribution may be from the subscribers, in order to give it a speedy, and extensive circulation; and if there be more subscribed than will pay for the printing of the 500 copies, that brother Whitehead shall pay such overplus to brother Collins, as a compensation for his trouble.

14th. Read and received the corresponding letters to sister Associations, and appointed the brethren as our messengers

to bear them, viz: Brethren Norvel Robertson and John P. Martin, to the Bigby, Brethren Nathan Morris and James Thigpen, to the Union, and, Brethren Davis Collins and George W. King, to the Mississippi, Associations.

15th. *Resolved*, That, we confer with the Mississippi and the Union Associations, on the subject of Missions, agreeably to the request of the Mississippi Association, and that we appoint the Brethren, George W. King, Nathan Morris, William Whitehead, David Cleveland, and Shadrach King, to be our committee of conference, to meet the committees of the sister Associations, at Zion-Hill Church, Amite county, on Friday before the first Sabbath of May next.

16th. Appointed brother David Cleveland, Treasurer.

17th. *Ordered*, That Twenty Dollars be paid, out of the Association Fund, towards completing the payment of printing the Minutes of the Pearl River Baptist Convention.

18th. The sinners let fall the *penitential* tear, and others appeared seriously solemn. Divine service was closed, by brother John Smith, in a very pathetic exhortation, and prayer by brother George W. King.

19th. Appointed our next Association to be at Ebenezer Church, on Holloday's Creek, Lawrence county, to commence on Saturday before the first Sabbath in September next.

20th. Appointed brother Norvel Robertson to write the Circular Letter for the next Association.

21st. Appointed brother Norvel Robertson to preach the introductory sermon; and in case of failure, brother Nathan Morris.

22nd. Appointed brother Shadrach King to superintend the printing and distributing of 300 copies of these Minutes, with the Constitution annexed.

Brother George W. King prayed, and brother William Cooper adjourned the Association with an Apostolic benediction.

Signed by order of the Association.

WILLIAM COOPER, *Moderator.*
SHADRACH KING, *Clerk.*

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CIRCULAR LETTER.

THE PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION, CONSTITUTED
AT FAIR RIVER CHURCH, TO THE CHURCHES THEY RE-
PRESENT, SENDETH GREETING.

Dear Brethren,

ALTHOUGH letters of this kind have been numerous, yet, we think it our duty to stir up your minds by way of remembrance. With the most heart-felt gratification, with the most pleasing sensations of soul, and the most grateful feelings, we hear of the prosperity of Zion in some of our infant churches. The churches at Poplar Spring, Friendship, Ebenezer, Bahala, Fair River, Boughchitto and New Chapel, have experienced in different degrees, the outpouring of the Spirit.—This evinces to us the pleasing fact, that our *Covenant God* has not yet forgotten to be gracious. We likewise hear of the most gracious visitations of the churches in New-York, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia and Tennessee, which, together with the operations now going forward for the *evangelizing* of the whole world, cause our drooping heads to be raised, and our languishing spirits to revive. We are ready to hail the propitious era, foretold by ancient prophets, when the kingdoms of the earth shall become the kingdom of our Lord and his Christ.

If we then be attentive to the voice of God in his Providences, we shall open the ear to instruction, and be solicitous to set in order the *things* that are *wanting*. Family religion is too much neglected: the Sabbath is too frequently profaned: and the Lord's Supper is but partially observed. Of these we would speak more particularly:—and,

1st. Of family religion, which consists in family government, family prayer, and family instruction. We often pray for the destruction of sin in the world, and the promotion of holiness: but how little do we do to destroy the one, and to promote the other, in our families? In rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, in the days of Zerubbabel, every man was required to build over against his own house—so, the way to promote religion in the world is, for every one to begin at his own family. Alas! that some who claim the brotherhood do not keep up family prayer! How many neglect family instruction for the want of religion! And how many omit it from principle, to avoid making their children formalists, Pharisees and hypocrites!!

that a part of our time should be wholly devoted to piety and religion, is according to the reason and the fitness of things; and derives its authority not only from the will of the *Legislator*, but from the moral sense of man; is therefore *moral natural*, and has not, and cannot be altered.

3rd. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper is but partially attended in the infant churches of our connexion. Remember that this is a strengthening ordinance, enforced by the command of a dying Saviour: "*This do in remembrance of me;*" and, "*as oft as ye do this ye do shew forth my death until I come.*" Can any Christian, or Christian Church disregard this Godlike command, falling in such plaintive strains from the lips of a dying Redeemer?

Dear Brethren, having in a short and imperfect manner, called your attention to some of your duties, we would now speak a word of encouragement to you. Though the blast of envious backbiters howl, though the billows of temptation roll together in impetuous surges, and the sea of trial opens its mouth to ingulph you; yet the *little bark*, on which the everlasting love of God is placed, shall safely outride the storm, and ultimately gain the *port*, where storms and hurricanes, billows and tempest, shall hurt no more. He that shall come, will come, and he will not tarry. The last vial is pouring forth to make way for the final destruction of the Beast; and the Angel, having the everlasting Gospel, is flying through the midst of Heaven, proclaiming the good news of Grace. "The bloody portal of war is again shut," and portends some propitious event to the Church of Christ; and we should raise our heads and say, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Awake, Christian soldiers—put on the whole armour of faith, and sleep not on the verge of time. The night is far spent—the day is at hand; let us put off the works of darkness, and put on the whole armour of light. Shall we slumber until that day come upon us unawares? God forbid. Let us then be zealous, dear brethren, in the good cause of our God. The time is short: it remaineth that they who have wives, be as though they had none; and they that buy, as though they possessed not. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true; whatsoever things are honest; whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure; whatsoever things are lovely; whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue; and if there be any praise—think on these things."

WILLIAM COOPER, *Moderator.*
SHADRACH KING, *Clerk.*

Compare 1837, p. 7-10
and 1847, p. 6-9

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLES OF FAITH, RULES, &c.

OF THE

Pearl River Baptist Association.

PREAMBLE.

WE, the Churches of Jesus Christ, who have been regularly baptised upon a profession of our faith, are convinced of the necessity of a combination of Churches, and of maintaining a correspondence, for the preserving a federal union amongst all the Churches of the same faith and order—We, therefore, do agree, to unite and form ourselves into an Association, upon the following principles, namely:

ARTICLES OF FAITH.

1. WE believe in ONE only true and living GOD; and that there are a Trinity of persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—the same in essence, equal in power and glory.
2. We believe the Scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, were given by inspiration of God; are of Divine Authority; and the only rule of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the fall of Adam; in the imputation of his sin to all his posterity; in the total depravity of Human Nature; and Man's inability to restore himself to the favor of God.
4. We believe in the everlasting love of God to his people; in the eternal unconditional election of a definite number of the Human Family, to grace and glory.
5. We believe that sinners are only justified in the sight of God, by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ; which is unto all, and upon all them that believe.
6. We believe, all those who were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world, and in time, effectually called, regenerated, converted, and sanctified; and are kept, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.
7. We believe there is ONE MEDIATOR between God and Man, the man Christ Jesus, who by the satisfaction which he made to law and justice, "in becoming an offering for sin," hath, by his most precious blood, redeemed the elect, from

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8. We believe
after justification
it is the duty
of love.

9. We believe
in the final judgment
and the punishment

1. We believe
in the congregation
up to the Lord
keep up a Gospel.

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7. We believe
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1. THOSE
churches in our

under the curse of the law, that they might be holy and without blame, before him in love.

8. We believe good works are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification; are evidences of a gracious state; and that it is the duty of all believers, to perform them from a principle of love.

9. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and a general judgment; and that the happiness of the righteous, and the punishment of the wicked, will be eternal.

ON GOSPEL ORDER.

1. We believe that the visible Church of Jesus Christ, is a congregation of faithful persons, who have given themselves up to the Lord, and to one another, and have covenanted, to keep up a Godly discipline, agreeably to the rules of the gospel.

2. We believe that Jesus Christ is the head of the Church: the only law giver—that the government is with the body, "the Church," and is equally the right and privilege of each member thereof.

2. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are gospel ordinances, appointed by Jesus Christ, and are to be continued in the church until his second coming.

4. We believe Baptism, by immersion, is the only scriptural mode, and that believers are the only proper subjects.

5. We believe that none but regular baptised church members, have a right to partake of the Lord's Supper.

6. We believe it to be the duty and privilege, of all believers, to make a public profession of their faith—to submit to baptism by immersion, and to give themselves members of the visible church.

7. We believe it to be the duty of every regular organized church, to expel from her communion, all disorderly members, who are immoral in their lives—or that hold doctrines contrary to the scriptures.

RULES OF DECORUM,

ADOPTED BY THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

1. **THOSE** delegates who are regularly chosen by the churches in our Union, shall compose the Association.

2. The delegates so chosen shall produce letters from their respective churches, certifying their appointment, together with their number in fellowship—those baptised, received by letter, restored, dismissed, excommunicated, and dead, since the last Association.

3. The delegates thus chosen and convened, shall be denominated the Pearl River Baptist Association.

4. This Association shall have a Moderator and Clerk, who shall be annually chosen by a majority of the members present.

5. If new churches desire to be admitted into the union, they shall petition by letter and delegates—If, on examination, found orthodox and orderly, shall be received by the Association, and manifested by the Moderator, giving their delegates the right-hand of fellowship.

6. No church in the union, shall have a right to more than two delegates, until she shall exceed one hundred members. Then she shall have a right to an additional delegate for every fifty.

7. Every query sent to the Association by any church in the union, shall be read, and put to vote by the Moderator, whether it shall be debated, and if there shall be a majority for it, it shall be taken up and investigated: Provided always, that those be first considered, which affect the union of the churches.

8. Every motion made and seconded, shall be taken up by the Association, except it be withdrawn by the person who made it.

9. Only one person shall speak at once, who shall rise from his seat and address the Moderator.

10. The person thus speaking shall not be interrupted except he depart from the subject, break the rules of decorum, or cast reflections on a brother: in which case he shall be immediately called to order by the Moderator.

11. No person shall speak more than twice to the same subject, without leave of the Moderator.

12. No brother shall finally depart from the conference without leave of the Association.

13. The Moderator shall have the liberty of speaking to any question that may be debated (provided the chair be previously filled;) and to have the privilege of voting, only when the Association is equally divided.

14. The names of the delegates shall be enrolled by the Clerk, and called over as often as the Association may deem expedient.

15. We think it absolutely necessary to have an Associa-

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tion Fund, for defraying the expences of the same—for the raising and supporting of which, we think it the duty of each church in the union to contribute such sums as they may deem proper and send by the hands of their delegates to the Association: and the money thus contributed by the churches, shall be deposited in the hands of a Treasurer, by the Association appointed; who shall be accountable to the Association, for all monies by him received, and paid out according to the direction of the same.

16. The Minutes of the Association shall be read, (and corrected if necessary,) and signed by the Moderator and Clerk, before the Association rises.

THE POWERS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

1. IT shall be the business of this Association, to provide for the general union of the churches.

2. To keep up a friendly correspondence, (when convenient,) with those Associations of the same faith and order.

3. This Association shall have no power, to Lord it over God's heritage, nor infringe upon any of the internal rights of the churches.

4. It shall be the duty of this Association to give the churches the best advice in their power in difficult matters—to enquire into any difficulties which may exist between sister churches, and remove them if possible.

5. To admit any of the brethren in the ministry as assistants, but not to give them the privilege of voting.

6. This Association shall have power to withdraw from any church in the union, who may be unsound in principle, or immoral in practice, until reclaimed.

7. To appoint any person or persons, by and with their consent, to transact any business, which the Association may deem necessary.

8. The Association shall have power to adjourn to any time or place they may think most proper.

9. The Association shall be opened, and closed with prayer.

PEA

LAWREN

MINUTES ²

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST

Association,

Convened at Ebenezer Church,

LAWRENCE COUNTY, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1821.

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PRINTED BY P. ISLER,

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SATURDAY, 1st September, 1821.

1st. Brother Norvell Robertson, accordingly to appointment, preached the introductory sermon, from Psa. CX. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, thou art a Priest forever, after the order of Melchizedec."

2d. Brother Davis Collins opened the Association with singing and prayer.

3d. Read the letters from the Churches, and enrolled the names of their delegates.

4th. Chose brother Davis Collins, Moderator, and brother Shadrach King, Clerk.

5th. Invited the ministering brethren present, not delegated, to take seats with us, and assist in the transaction of business.

6th. Two churches, *Mount Moriah*, and *Hebron*, petitioned by letter and delegates to become members of our body; and, full satisfaction being obtained, they were received by the right hand of fellowship.

7th. Appointed brother Davis Collins to write the corresponding letters to the Mississippi, Union, and Bigby, Associations.

8th. At the request of the writer of the Circular Letter, a committee was appointed, consisting of the author, the brethren Geo. W. King, and Thomas Willingham, with the Moderator and Clerk, to *revise* the Circular and *arrange* the business for Monday.

9th. The Moderator prayed, and the Association adjourned until Monday at half past nine o'clock, A. M.

The Lord's day was devoted to public exercise of solemn devotion, and three sermons delivered, by the brethren, Lawrence Scarborough, Shadrach King, and Geo. W. King, to a large, serious, and solemn, congregation.

MONDAY, 3d. September, 1821.

Met agreeably to adjournment.

Brother Moderator prayed.

10th. Read the Rules of Decorum for the government of this Association.

11th. The committee of *revision* and *arrangement* made their report, which was *unanimously* received.

12th. Received an Address, together with the "Seventh Annual Report, of the Board of Managers of the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination, in the United States, for *Foreign Missions*, and *other important objects, relative to the Redeemer's Kingdom*." Read the Address, and appointed brother Geo. W. King, our Corresponding Secretary with the said Board.

13th. *Resolved*, That this Association express their high gratification in the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, in

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tinent; and humbly pray that *HE* may overturn, and overturn, and overturn," all ignorance, superstition and idolatry, "till *HE* shall come whose right it is to reign."

14th. This Association have to announce to the Churches, the mournful tidings of the death of the two faithful laborers in the vineyard of our Lord—the Rev. Wm. Cooper, late Moderator of this body; and the Rev. Micajah Bulgium, late an emigrant from the State of Georgia. They were both full of years and good works, and their departure was marked with that resignation, comfort, and joyful assurance, with which the religion of Jesus can alone inspire.

15th. Agreed, to recommend to the churches, the observance of the first day of January next, as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer to Almighty God for a revival of his holy religion, and the diffusion of Gospel light throughout the world.

16th. Took into consideration the Query from the Bahala Church.—

Query. "What course should a church pursue to whom application is made for fellowship, by a person who has been a member of a sister church in a distant state, and removed to this state excommunicated; but since believes that God has granted him repentance and healed his backsliding?"

ANSWER. We recommend, in all such cases, that such person be instructed to obtain a letter of dismission from the church to which he formerly belonged, if such church be in existence; if not, let the church to whom the application is made, act discretionarily.

17th. The Circular Letter, prepared by brother Norvel Robertson, was read and unanimously adopted.

18th. Read and unanimously adopted the letters to corresponding Associations; and appointed the brethren, as our Messengers to bear them, viz. Geo. W. King, and Thos. Willingham to the Mississippi, Absalom Harper, and Shadrach King, to the Union, and Davis Collins, and John P. Martin, to the Bigby Associations.

19th. Resolved, That we consider it inexpedient to have our Associations to be Communion seasons.

20th. Appointed the next Association to be at New-Chapel Church, Pike County, to commence on the Saturday before the second Lord's day in September next.

21st. Appointed brother Shadrach King to write the Circular Letter for the next year.

22d. Appointed brother Nathan Morris to preach the introductory sermon for the next Association, and in case of failure, brother Davis Collins.

23d. Resolved, That we have one Association Fund to defray all the contingent expenses of the same.

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25th. Appointed the clerk to superintend the printing and distribution of 500 copies of these Minutes ; and that he draw on the Treasurer for the amount to defray the expence of said printing.

26th. Ordered, That the clerk have 15 dollars for his services.

27th. The Moderator adjourned the Association with exhortation, singing, and solemn prayer.

Signed by order of the Association.

DAVIS COLLINS, *Modr.*
SHADRACH KING, *Clk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Ministers and Messengers, composing the Pearl River Baptist Association, convened at Ebenezer Church, on Saturday the first day of September, 1821, to the Churches they represent, send christian salutation.

BELOVED BRETHREN,

IN addressing you through the medium of a Circular Letter, we would make choice of such subjects as are best calculated to instruct, edify, and promote your *spiritual growth in grace*.—To attain that desirable end we shall address you, at present, on the important subject of *good works*.

We are apprehensive that many erroneous ideas prevail amongst men, on this important article of the christian faith :—to detect those errors, and to illustrate the *nature and design* of good works, are the principal objects of this Circular Address.

It cannot be expected that our limits will admit of a minute investigation of the subject. We shall therefore, call your attention to some of the most prominent points respecting *those good works* in particular which are of a *religious character*.

It cannot be denied, but, that it is the indispensable duty of *all*, whether *saint or sinner*, to perform good works ; because *no change* has taken place in the *law* that imposed the *obligation* on man in his *original rectitude*. There are likewise, many things, which are in the power of *all* to *perform*, and which *all* are *bound to perform*, by those moral ties, that bind mankind together as one general family, and which are good and profitable in their tendency ; because, thereby peace, harmony, order, and a good understanding are cultivated and preserved in governments, neighborhoods, families, &c. But man in his natural state, cannot perform any thing that is *intrinsically good* in the sight of God—

and "*without faith it is impossible to please him.*" Our blessed Lord beautifully illustrates this point by the figure of a fruit tree: Matthew XII. 33. "*Either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.*" Man has become "*carnal minded, which is enmity against God*" and "*is not subject to his law,*" which requires all our works to be performed with a view to the *glory of God*. This the *natural man cannot do*; because, he is a *corrupt stock*, and therefore, his fruit must, of consequence, be also *corrupt*. Again, as man has become *earthly-minded*, all his sacrifices are of the fruits of the earth, though he is apt to suppose that there is something *meritorious* in his good works, (as he calls them,) or, at least, *amiable* in the sight of God, yet never considers that there is no way of acceptance, for himself or his works, but through Christ, in whom alone God is well pleased with sinners.

In order, therefore, that a sinner may be placed in a situation to perform good works, a change must be effected. "*The tree must be made good.*" Man must be made a new creature.—This is the work of God.—It is wrought by a power equal to that which created the world. The Apostle, addressing the saints at Ephesus, writes thus: "*Not of works lest any man should boast; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*" Eph. II. 9. 10. We see, in the above passage, that the change under consideration, is described in the light of a creation—the *workmanship of him who created all things by Jesus Christ*; and this creation must necessarily bear an analogy to the creation of the Universe. We likewise learn from the history of that event, given by Moses, that the Word of God was alone employed in bringing all things into existence; and, so also, in the second creation the same Word is employed, as saith the Apostle Peter, Epistle I. 23. "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.*"

Prior to this work the sinner is dead, as to spiritual things, and all the works he performs are *dead works*, and thus he remains until life is imparted from Christ, who is the life of every believer; and the life which he imparts is *eternal life*; for power is given him of his Father, to "*give eternal life to as many as HE hath given HIM.*" They are under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the third person in the glorious Trinity, by whom they are instructed, in a certain degree, into the *knowledge of spiritual things*, of which they were before ignorant. Among these, is the *moral law*, which is enforced in its purity and spirituality, and convinces them of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the immurity of their own

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short of justifying them in the sight of an *infinitely pure* and *holy lawgiver*, who will accept of nothing from his creatures, but the *perfection of holiness*. In this extremity the gospel points out the way of salvation, through the obedience of *HIM* who has magnified the law, by presenting a *righteousness* which he completed when *HE* arose from the dead; and which, when *imputed* to a sinner is "the fulfilling of the law for *righteousness*." This view of the atonement weans the sinner from all hopes of justification by works of righteousness which he can do, and sets him to *hungering* and *thirsting* after the righteousness of Christ. In this frame of soul, the gospel recognizes him as the character to whom the promises are made; and, at the time appointed by infinite wisdom, he is enabled, by faith, to *appropriate* to himself, the blessings of *salvation*, offered in the gospel to such characters, which makes him *rejoice* in hope of eternal life. He is no longer under the law, but under *grace*, and therefore, has the promise that *sin shall not have dominion over him*. Thus, being made a new creature, he feels himself under obligation to *promote* the *glory* of *HIM* that *loved him*, and *whom he loves* in return, and is solicitous to know what he will have him to *do*. His inquiry now, is not, "What shall I *do* that I may be *worthy*;" but, "What shall I *render* unto the Lord for all *his benefits*." He now performs his services from *motives* of *obedience*, flowing from *love* to *God* and *man*. He has received the spirit of adoption, and (as far as his proportion of faith will admit) he claims God as his Father, and desires to approve himself as an *obedient* and *loving child*. All he does in the way of obedience, is in the name of the Lord Jesus, through whom he hopes that *himself* and his works will be *accepted* before the throne of God. All his petitions, thanksgivings, and acknowledgments, are offered up through Christ; and he looks for all necessary blessings to flow down to him through the *same channel*.

Thus, dear brethren, having given a brief description of the nature of good works, and of the change that is necessary to place a sinner in a situation to perform them, we shall propose a few things with respect to the *design* of them.

We have sufficiently shewn, in the preceding remarks, that the design of good works is not to justify or recommend a sinner to the favor of God; but still it is presumed, that the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, had an important end designed in enjoining *them* both under the *law* and under the *gospel*. It is generally admitted, that the *end* which the Allwise Creator had in view in creating man, *was*, that he might glorify *him* on that stage which he was destined to occupy. *This was to be done*

then he came *short* of such an *obedience*, he also came *short* of the *glory* of God. Hence the necessity of being *created anew*, inasmuch as the omnipotent Creator would not be defeated in his designs. This appears to be uniformly the *designed object* which the Creator had; and all those, who are "renewed in the spirit of their minds," receive a correspondent disposition, so far as their limited capacities will admit. "The tree is made *good*," and, therefore, capable of bringing forth *good fruit*. "Herein is my Father glorified," says Jesus, "that ye bear much fruit." As they are the *children of light*, they are desirous of *walking* as the children of light, that the *light* that is in them may so *shine*, that not only *themselves* but *others also* may *glorify* their Heavenly Father. It is an honor to a man when he has executed any piece of work, that it is generally approved; even so, also, it is an honor to God, when his children, whom he has "begotten again," have a lively hope, "so *conduct themselves*, as to make it manifest that they are his *workmanship as new creatures*." We know of no other way how this can be effected, but, by a conscious *obedience* to his *revealed will*. All good works are founded in Revelation; and the *propriety* of them is determined by the *will of God*, and not by the *motives* from which they are performed. "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are sufficient rule of faith and practice," is an article that is inserted in all our Confessions of Faith, and Church Covenants. It is of importance, therefore, that *every one* who has named the name of Christ, should be *assiduously engaged* in searching the Scriptures, that he may know what the Lord hath *required* of him in order to *glorify HIM*; for if we perform things, which the word of God does not require of us, HE may justly demand, "Who hath *required this* at your hand?" Moreover, the *sincerity* of our intentions will furnish us with *no excuse*, that will be admitted before his *tribunal*; for we make no doubt, but that the worshipers of Baal in Elijah's day, were and the worshipers of Juggernaut in our day, are, as *sincere* in their *idolatrous* and *superstitious* worship as any of our modern zealots for works of supererogation.

Another important, though *subordinate* design of good works, is, that they serve as *evidences* of our *justification*. We are justified by faith; and it is *in vain* for a man to *pretend* that he has *faith*, except he can produce good works to *prove it*. Faith and good works are inseparably connected together; because the latter is the fruit of the former, and *the fruit is never barren*. God's people are described in his word to be a peculiar people, *zealous of good works*; and when we *walk* in all *holy obedience* to the revealed will of God, we are in possession of one *material evidence* to *prove* our *gracious* state, both to ourselves,

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and to others. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples indeed, when ye have love one to another." And our Lord, when he had said, John XV. 8. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit," likewise added, "So shall ye be my disciples." We do not think that bearing much fruit makes us his disciples, but *proves* us to be such. This is also what the Apostle James means, when he says that Abraham, and the harlot Rahab were justified by works: their works proved that they were in possession of that faith which secured to them the promise.

Another design, which the fruits of faith, or good works, have in view, is, their *profitableness* to others. We were formed social creatures, and every one is bound to contribute his part according to his ability, to promote the happiness of society in general. Hence the reasonableness of that injunction: "As we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to them that are of the household of faith." "The end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart;" and if it be genuine, it will manifest itself "*indeed and in truth*," as well as "*in word and in tongue*." The consequences of which are, the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the stranger is entertained, the sick are visited, and whatsoever the principles of benevolence and humanity may suggest, is scrupulously observed; and, thus, we see, that *true faith worketh by love*. The *profitableness* of good works will appear the more obvious, when we appeal to your own experience, founded on fact. When you see a man that is called a brother, negligent, slothful in business, remiss in his attendance on the duties of religion, shutting up his bowels of compassion towards the poor and distressed, close and niggardly in contributing to the support of the gospel, &c. he stands low in your esteem, and fellowship as a brother, and serious doubts are excited relative to his *gracious state*. Whereas, on the other hand, when you see a brother live up to his dignified character as a Christian, by his diligent and unremitting attention to the duties of religion, both in public and in private; when you see him ready to alleviate the distresses of the needy and afflicted; when you see him manifest a willingness to contribute his part in proportion to the means he possesses, to the support of the gospel, &c. he stands high in your fellowship and affections, and you are wont to set him up as a standard of piety and goodness. His godly example, likewise, has an influence on your conduct, to provoke you to love and to good works. These things, dear brethren, we would impress on your minds, and exhort you to abound in the work of the Lord, as you know that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord.

DAVIS COLLINS, Moderator.

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MINUTES

OF THE

Pearl River Baptist Association.

CONVENED AT THE MEETING HOUSE

OF

NEW CHAPEL CHURCH,

PIKE COUNTY, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE

Seventh day of September, 1822.

COLUMBIA, (MISS.)

PRINTED BY PETER ISLER

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MINUTES

OF THE

Pearl River Baptist Association.

Saturday, 7th September, 1822.

1st. Brother MORRIS preached the introductory sermon, from I Cor. vi. latter clause of the 19 and 20 verses, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and spirit, which are God's."

2nd. Brother COLLINS opened the Association with singing and prayer.

3rd. Read the letters from the Churches, minuted their state, and enrolled the names of their delegates.

4th. Chose brother COLLINS, Moderator, and brother S. KING, Clerk.

5th. Received letters from corresponding Associations, viz: from the Mississippi, a letter by their messengers, SAMUEL MARSH and ASA MERCER; from the Union, a letter and seventeen copies of their Minutes, by their messenger, LAWRENCE SCARBOROUGH; and from the Bigby, a letter and twenty copies of their Minutes, their messengers failed to attend.

6th. Received an Address from "The Board of Managers of the General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for

Mount Moriah, Lawrence,

JOHN D. HART, Granberry Blunt,

1 5 3 1 1 17 2 25

Foreign Missions. 8th. Which communicated the pleasing intelligence of many openings in Providence for the spread of the gospel, and the success attending their labors. To manifest our friendly views respecting the objects of the said Board, brother GEORGE W. KING is appointed our *Stated Corresponding Secretary* with them, until further arrangements are made.

7th. Appointed brother COLLINS to write the letter to corresponding associations.

8th. Brethren ROBERTSON, C. W. KING and THIGPEN, with the Moderator and Clerk, were appointed a committee to revise the Circular, and arrange the business for Monday.

9th. Brother MODERATOR prayed and adjourned the Association to Monday 9 o'clock, A. M.

The New Chapel Church appointed the brethren MERCER, MARSH and COLLINS to preach on the Sabbath, who, in the order of their names, preached to a large and attentive congregation; and brother G. W. KING closed the meeting with exhortation, prayer and praises. So interesting were the subjects of discussion, such were the energy, convictive arguments, and zeal of the ministers, and such was the effect that appeared in the congregation, that, we hope good was done. To GOD ALONE BE THE PRAISE.

Monday, 9th September, 1822.

Met and proceeded in business as follows:

Brother MARSH prayed.

10th. Invited ministers and brethren, not delegated, to seats, and to aid in business.

11th. Read the Articles of Faith, Rules of Decorum, and, Gospel Order, of this Association.

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12th. The committee of revision and arrangement made their report, which was received, and they were discharged.

13th. The Circular Letter prepared by brother S. KING was read, and unanimously adopted.

14th. Read and adopted the Corresponding Letter, prepared by brother COLLINS.

15th. Took into consideration the petition from the African Church, and, after due deliberation, it was

Resolved, That the brethren S. KING, David Cleveland and A. HARPER be appointed a committee to visit the said church, inquire into all the bearings which a late law of this state has on them in depriving them of their religious privileges, and to give them such advice as their circumstances may require. And,

Resolved unanimously, That the brethren DAVIS COLLINS, SHADRACH KING, GEORGE W. KING and Harmon Runnels, be appointed a committee to memorialize the Legislature of this State, in behalf of this Association, for the repeal of so much of the said law as deprives our African churches of their religious privileges; and that the said committee wait on the legislature at their next session with the said memorial. Also,

Resolved unanimously, That we request the Mississippi, and Union Baptist Associations to unite with us in memorializing the legislature for the repeal of so much of said law as affects our African churches.

16th. Agreed, that brethren COLLINS, G. W. KING, S. KING, Cleveland and Runnels, be appointed messengers to meet the messengers of the sister Associations, at the annual meeting of the "Mississippi Missionary Society," at Zion Hill Church, Amite County, on the Saturday before the first Lord's day in July, 1823.

17th. The Bulah Church not having represented herself in this body for two sessions, the brethren COLLINS, MARTIN and THIGPEN are appointed a committee to visit said church, and inquire the reason why she does not represent herself, and report to the next Association.

18th. Appointed corresponding messengers, viz: brethren COLLINS, G. W. KING, and S. KING to the Mississippi, brethren MORRIS, THIGPEN and HARPER to the Union, and brethren MARTIN and Pitts to the Bigby Associations.

19th. *Ordered*, That brother MARTIN receive fifteen dollars, and brother Pitts ten dollars, to bear their expenses in travelling as our messengers to the Bigby Association.

20th. *Ordered*, That brethren COLLINS and MARTIN receive fifteen dollars each, to remunerate them for their travelling expenses as our messengers to the Bigby Association, last year. Brother COLLINS made a donation of his expenses to the Association.

21st. Agreed, that the Association be considered to be laid off into two districts, Pearl River being the line; that the Association sit alternately in each district; and that the delegates of the churches of each district shall have the privilege to determine at what place the Association shall be held within their district.

22nd. Recommended to the churches the observance of the first day of January next, as a day of *humiliation, fasting, and prayer for a more general revival of religion in the churches, and the out pouring of the Spirit on the world of the ungodly.*

23rd. Appointed brother COLLINS to write the Circular Letter for the next year; and he is requested to write on "the discipline of the gospel."

24th. Appointed brother COLLINS to preach the

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introductory sermon at our next session; and in case of failure, brother G. W. KING.

25th. The next Association to convene at the meeting house of Providence Church, Marion County, on the Saturday before the second Sabbath in September, 1823.

26th. Appointed brother COLLINS to superintend the printing and distribution of seven hundred copies of these Minutes; and he is authorized to draw on the treasury to defray the expense.

27th. *Ordered*, That brethren COLLINS and S. KING, receive ten dollars each for their services.

28th. Collected eighty four dollars and twenty five cents as the contribution of the churches.

29th. The Churches are requested to state in their letters to the next Association, their regular times of holding church meetings.

30th. After admonition, encouragement and consolation addressed to the members of this body by the Moderator, the Association was commended to "THE GRACE OF GOD," and adjourned.

Signed by order of the Association.

DAVIS COLLINS, *Mod'r.*

SHADRACH KING, *Clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

The Pearl River Baptist Association, convened at the Meeting House of New Chapel Church, on Saturday, the 7th day of September, 1822, to the churches they represent, sendeth christian love:—

DEAR BRETHREN,

THERE is a mournful pleasure in recalling the years that are gone, and in recollecting scenes that have fled forever from our sight. In this retrospect of the mind, melancholy spreads her soft and sober mantle over our senses, 'till faith describes the period, when God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shone into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." How pleasant then were the sensations of divine love! How did the candle of the Lord shine upon our tabernacle! and how did we rejoice in the light of his grace and truth! We could then look down on the sublunary enjoyments of the men of this world, and while we contemned their pursuits, we pitied their folly. We sailed in the sunshine of faith, and fixed our hope, as a sure anchor, beyond this vale of tears. We were even presumptuous enough to think, that we should always have a gentle gale, a smooth sea, and an unclouded sun, until we should arrive at the *haven of rest*. But He, whose ways are past comprehending, has only left us involved in dark clouds of the night; the storms of winter have howled dreadfully around us, and we have cried in anguish, "deep calleth to deep at the noise of thy water-spouts; all thy waves and billows are gone over

us." And where is he, who is forcibly, hide his footsteps? "Watchman, answer thou, where is he?" "Watchman, ble indeed scarcely, nitely re the night there; a him; on cannot b hand, an soul we might fir When gone, the ous, our rudder b are drive denly a sky, the t ken of t into our Lord!!! Passing suming th the same quicksand are beclo with con night?" and are th ger appro alert, and

us." Although we are ready often to say, "Lord, where is thy former loving kindness;" yet we feel forcibly, that it is our sins that have caused him to hide his face from us: and turning aside "by the footsteps of the flock," we ask with anxiety, "*Watchmen, what of the night?*" Receiving no answer from the drowsy watchman, we ask again, "*Watchmen, what of the night?*" And lamentable indeed is our case, if the sluggish watchman, scarcely roused from his somnial dreams, indefinitely replies, "the morning cometh, and so doth the night." *We go forwards, but our Lord is not there; and backwards, but we cannot perceive him; on our left hand, where he doth work, but we cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, and we cannot see him;*" and in anguish of soul we exclaim, "*O, that we knew where we might find him!!*"

When all our dependence fails, our strength is gone, the wind is boisterous, the waves tumultuous, our compass lost, our canvass top-heavy, our rudder broken; and we, in impervious darkness, are driven at the mercy of the storm—then suddenly a *star* arises in the eastern portal of the sky, the tempest is past, the day dawns, we are in ken of the port, the sun of righteousness shines into our hearts, and we rejoice in the light of the Lord!!!

Passing through many such scenes, and presuming that you sail down the same streams, pass the same shoals, escape the same whirlpools and quicksands, are driven by the same tempests, and are beclouded with the same darkness, we ask you with condolence and sympathy, "*What of the night?*" Do your watchmen give you the hour? and are they vigilant and active when they see danger approaching? Do your ministers appear on the alert, and cry the alarm, when they discover a rock

on which you are ready to split? O, for more activity and zeal in these servants of the Most High God! And, O, more watchmen, to awake for the welfare of Zion.

Permit us, dear brethren in the ministry, to address you with tender concern, and importunately to ask you, "*What of the night?*" Important is your station, and high responsible your obligations. Even when the cloud of glory is seen above the sanctuary, it is but the "dim dawn," and you, as lamp bearers, should hold up the light of life. Should not we, the ministers of the gospel of Christ, recollect that we are placed between the darkness and the light, standing between the living and the dead, and connected with the church of God, which is the dawn of heavenly light below? And are we inordinate concerning ourselves with the traffic of this world, its politics, its riches, its applause, or its honors? Do we show by the gravity of our conduct, that our minds are fixed on the importance of our station as watching for immortal souls? Do we not too frequently give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme that *Holy Name* by which we are called? Is not our conversation too often "not seasoned with grace?" Do we attend to our private duties with strictness and conscientiousness? Or are we so vain as to expect the divine assistance, without feeling our dependance and imploring that aid? Do we so govern and instruct our families, that others may take knowledge that they are the households of the Ambassadors of Christ? Do we read more of the political jargon of the times, than of our *divine commission*? When we enter into meditation or study, is it about the concerns of our own souls, or those of others? or what we shall say to recommend our divine Lord? or is it, to contrive ways and means to lay up a portion for ourselves and families? Have we

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not learned, that the Lord is the priest's portion. "When we enter the *sacred desk*, is it with fervent desire to benefit the souls of our hearers? Or does pride prompt us to display our ingenuity, talents, powers of reasoning, &c? Do we not frequently, *alas! frequently*, preach the gospel without a gospel spirit? If a stranger to our religion were to hear many of our sermons, would he not be more ready to suppose us to be the disciples of a Seneca, or an Epictitus, a Locke or a Saurin, than the despised followers of the crucified Jesus? Is the offence of the Cross ceased? and is it not because so little of its doctrines are preached? In these trying times, do we find that promise fulfilled, that "*he that watereth, shall be watered also himself?*" If entreating poor sinners to be reconciled to God, do we address them with a languor or deadness that betrays that our whole hearts are not engaged for them? Do we not sometimes draw wrong conclusions from gospel truths, and almost making excuses for them, settle them in the most state in which they can be, this side of *Eternal Ruin*? Ought we not rather to thunder the law upon them for conviction, the gospel for encouragement, and the precious promises for consolation, not regarding their inability, which arises from non-conformity to the will of God, and prostitution to the service of Satan; and therefore renders their neglect the more criminal? "*Watchmen, what of the night?*"

"For my part (says a flaming, zealous, and indefatigable minister of the gospel,) as I am ashamed of my own dull and careless heart, and of my slothful and unprofitable course of life, so the Lord knows, I am ashamed of every sermon that I preach: when I think what I am, and who sent me, and how much the salvation of men is concerned in it, I am made to tremble, lest God should

judge me to be a slanderer of his truth and the souls of men, and lest in my best sermon, I should be guilty of their blood. Methinks that we should not speak a word to men in matters of such consequence, without tears, or the greatest earnestness that we possibly can. Were we not too much guilty of the sin which we reprove, it would be so. Whether we were alone or in company, our business, and *such a business*, should be still in our minds, and as before our eyes; and we should sooner forget any thing than this."

We know, brethren, that it is not in our power always to feel the divine influence in our ministrations; but, we believe that we should be more frequently blessed in this important point, if we were more constant and diligent in the use of private means. When we labor in the cause of God, how reasonable it is to be guided by his directions! When we are about to choose our subject, what grace it is, that we can petition Infinite wisdom to make the choice! When we have thoughts of its division, what a privilege to lay it before *Him*, who can teach us *rightly to divide the word of truth*! But how inexplicable and stiff-necked is our conduct, when *we will* choose our own subjects, make our own divisions, labor in our own might, and then expect the divine blessing upon it? It would be equally as reasonable to expect to live without life, or to enjoy the pure unalloyed pleasures of an Angel, by our corporeal senses.

Take courage, dear brethren, ye trembling but faithful heralds of salvation, your cause is God's, and you may expect divine support. Offer not that which is lame on the Lord's altar; earnestly implore his blessing upon it, and ere long you shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever. In the mean time, be careful for nothing. Cannot your Heavenly

Father climb out of his house, and you and him are trespassing; and duty, "you shall not fail."

Dearly beloved churches, is at hand many of our animates. Ubron, Beth river. We yet see joy time to favor mourning of spring. the goodness for the salvation cred and strictly to vocation? Whatian supply ministers, the Lord? things of tion. Be and you shall vest.

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Father clothe you from his bounty, and feed you out of his hand of benevolence? Your *God is love*, and you are the peculiar objects of his care. In him are treasured all temporal and spiritual blessings; and while in the faithful discharge of your duty, "your bread shall be sure, and your water shall not fail."

Dearly beloved and longed for, brethren of the churches generally, "the night is far spent, the day is at hand." We hail the omens of a revival in many of our churches; and the exhilarating thought animates us, that it is already commenced in Hebron, Bethany, and Silver Creek, east of Pearl river. We indulge the pleasing hope, that we shall yet see joyful seasons, and that the time, *the set time* to favor Zion, has at length arrived. "The mourning of the turtle dove proclaims the approach of spring." Will you not then be intreated by the goodness of God, by the desire which you have for the salvation of poor sinners, "by all that is sacred and all that is dear to you," to attend more strictly to your private as well as social devotion? Will you unfeelingly withhold your christian supplications and temporal means from your ministers, while they are toiling in the harvest of the Lord? No, brethren, we are persuaded better things of you; and things which pertain to salvation. Be diligent and persevering in these things, and you shall soon see the blooms of a joyful harvest.

As yet 'tis night, dark night! the upraised eye is fixed on the stars twinkling "in the awful depth" only to preserve the soul steady and collected in its devotion to the *Triune God*, "who re-affirmeth from eternity to eternity" *my glory will I not give to another*. But when we shall burst the bands of mortality, and spring into the day-light of eternal glory, we shall join the redeemed company of all the sancti-

fled of every clime and age, to blaze in the sanctuary on high, with the divine, full, vast and extatic; and unite our voices to praise the Redeemer, in the profundity of eternity! *Amen!*

DAVID COLLINS, *Moderator*
SHADRACH KIN, *Clerk.*

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MINUTES

OF THE

Pearl River Baptist Association,

Convened at the Meeting House

OF

Providence Church,

MARION COUNTY,

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

ON THE

Thirteenth day of September, 1823.

Monticello, Miss.

PRINTED BY MILLS AND MARSCHALL.

1823

STAT

Ordained Minister's name
italics—an asterisk (*)
not represented.

CHURCHES AND CO

Half-Moon Bluff, *Washt.*
Boguechitto, *Pike*, - -
Mount Nebo, *Green* *Parish*
Antioch, *Marion*, - -
Pearl River, *Lawrence*,
Union, *Pike*, - - -
Fair River, *Lawrence*, -
Silver Creek, *Pike*, - -
New-Chapel, *Pike*, - -
Poplar Spring, *Lawrence*,
Dillings Creek, *Marion*,
Baileychitto, *Pike*, - -
Silver Creek, *Lawrence*
Bulah, *Lawrence*, - -
Friendship, *Pike*, - -
Sweet Water, *Perry*,
Talabala, *Perry*, - -
Providence, *Marion*, -
African, *Pike*, - - -
Pentecost, *Bainbridge*, -
Bethany, *Lawrence*, - -
Ebenezer, *Lawrence*, - -
Bahala, *Lawrence*, - -
Mount Moriah, *Lawrence*,
Hebron, *Lawrence*, - -
Chickesawha, *Green*, - -
Salem, *Wayne*, - - -
Zion, *Wayne*, - - -
Antioch, *Covington*, - -
Copiah, *Copiah*, - - -
New-Zion, *Marion*, - -
Mount Zion, *Copiah*, - - -

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Baptized, -
Received by letter, -
Dismissed by letter, -
Total in Fellowship, -
Contribution, \$100 75
amount as taken at th

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Ordained Minister's names are in SMALL CAPITALS, licenced preachers in italics—an asterisk (*) denotes absence, and (—) is affixed to Churches not represented.

CHURCHES AND COUNTIES.	NAMES OF DELIGATES.	Baptized.	Received by Letter.	Dismissed by Letter.	Excommunicated.	Restored.	Deceased.	Total in Fellowship.	Contributions.	Times of Church Meeting.
Half-Moon Bluff, Washt. Par. Lou.	NATHAN MORRIS, Laurant Dillon,	1	7	1	1			213 00		2nd
Boguechitto, Pike, — — —	SHADRACH COKER, * James D. Williams,	2	2	1	4			136 5 18		1st
Mount Nebo, Green Parish, Lou.								53		1st
Antioch, Marion, — — —	JAMES THIGPEN, Alfred G. Moore,	5	1	1				240 5 00		3rd
Pearl River, Lawrence, — — —	William Mullen, Wylie White,	9	2	1				139 4 00		3rd
Union, Pike, — — —	D. W. Wiltshire, Ralph Stoval,	11	2	1		1		422 00		4th
Fair River, Lawrence, — — —	SHADRACH KING, JOEL HARVY,	16	3	4	3			276 5 75		4th
Silver Creek, Pike, — — —	Richard Forrest, John Beesley,	2	1	3	1			293 00		3rd
New-Chapel, Pike, — — —	ABSAOM HARPER, Moses Bridges,*	1	1	5	2	1		413 25		2nd
Poplar Spring, Lawrence, — — —	James Warner, Josiah Stringer,	3	1	6	1			464 00		4th
Dillings Creek, Marion, — — —	Jacob Smith, Dillard Fatheree,	4						1324 00		1st
Baileychitto, Pike, — — —	Walter Jacob,* Henry Bond,							111 50		2nd
Silver Creek, Lawrence — — —	William Nall, William Eakins,	4	4	2		1		1513 00		2nd
Bulah, Lawrence, — — —										
Friendship, Pike, — — —	Zachariah Reeves, Samuel Cubstead,	1						253 18		3rd
Sweet Water, Perry, — — —	ASA CHADICK, Mathew Grantham,	6	5	3				1373 00		3rd
Talabala, Perry, — — —	Jesse Scrivener, John Moffett,		1	8				1374 00		2nd
Providence, Marion, — — —	NORVEL ROBERTSON, James C. Steele,	1	5	2	1			1363 50		1st
African, Pike, — — —		2		1	2	2		26		2nd
Pentecost, Bainbridge, — — —	Thomas Watts, Briton Bridges,	4	2	1				1301 50		2nd
Bethany, Lawrence, — — —	Levi Noble, James Baggett,	24	5	4	1	1		1696 00		3rd
Ebenezer, Lawrence, — — —	JOHN P. MARTIN, DAVIS COLLINS,	4	3	2	1			445 00		1st
Bahala, Lawrence, — — —	JAMES BAILEY, Christian Furr,*	9	10	2	3			1394 00		2nd
Mount Moriah, Lawrence, — — —	Granbery Blunt,*	2	2	5				1151 87		1st
Hebron, Lawrence, — — —	William Morris, Adam Brinson,	11	13	2	1			765 00		1st
Chickesawha, Green, — — —	JAMES POWEL, John Futch,							455 00		4th
Salem, Wayne, — — —	FRANCIS WALKER,* James Murray,							704 00		3rd
Zion, Wayne, — — —	HENRY CHAMBERS,							222 00		1st
Antioch, Covington, — — —	James Burn, Isham Hodges,							271 50		4th
Copiah, Copiah, — — —	Simeon Mercer, John Smith,*							223 00		3rd
New-Zion, Marion, — — —	Joseph Lewis, senr. Joseph Lewis, Jun.							394 00		1st
Mount Zion, Copiah, — — —	Joshua Sandefur, Lott Smith,*							111 50		1st

The number of the Mount Nebo Church, is put down as it was last year.

RECAPITULATION.

Baptized,	122	Excommunicated,	23
Received by letter,	63	Restored,	7
Dismissed by letter,	69	Deceased,	15
Total in Fellowship,			1134

Contribution, \$100 75 cents.—On counting the money it appears that there are \$109 75; but the above is amount as taken at the Association. Price for printing, folding and stitching these Minutes, 50c.

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Saturday, 11 o'clock, September 13, 1823.

1. The introductory sermon was delivered by brother Collins, from *Hebrews xi. 6.* "But without faith it is impossible to please HIM."

2. Brother Morris opened the Association by prayer.

3. Read the letters from the Churches, enrolled the names of the delegates, and minuted their state.

4. Brother Collins was chosen Moderator, and brother S. King, clerk.

5. Brother David Cooper, the messenger from the Mississippi Association, and the ministering brethren present, not deligated, were invited to seats, and their aid solicited.

6. Appointed the brethren Cooper, Thigpen and Morris, with the Moderator and Clerk to revise the Circular and arrange the business of the Session.

7. The Providence Church, appointed the brethren S. King, Cooper and Collins, to preach on the Lord's day, to commence at half-past 10 o'clock, A. M.

8. Brother Cooper prayed, and the Association adjourned Monday 10 o'clock, A. M.

In consequence of the inclemency of the weather, on the Sabbath, the congregation did not convene at the time appointed; but at half past 12 o'clock a considerable congregation assembled, and attended with great composure and solemnity, while brother COOPER preached from Gal. vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Brother COLLINS followed, from Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Brother S. KING, concluded by exhortation and prayer.

Monday 10 o'clock, Sept. 15.

Met and proceeded to business as follows:

Brother Collins prayed.

9. The committee of revision and arrangement made their report, which was received and they were discharged.

10. Read the Rules of decorum of this Association.

11. Received petitions for admittance into our union, from the Churches at Chickesawha, Antioch, (Covington county,) Salem, Zion, Copiah, New-Zion, and Mount Zion; and full sat-

isfaction being obtained. the right hand of fellowship was given to their delegates with great cordiality, and they invited to seats with us.

12. Received a letter of correspondence from the Beckbee Association, which was read with great satisfaction; but their messengers failed to attend. Brother David Cooper, the messenger from the Mississippi Association, received the right hand of fellowship, was invited to a seat, and his assistance earnestly solicited; the letter read.

13. The Association offered tribute of respect to the memory of three labourers in the Lord's vineyard, Rev. Messrs. William Whitehead, John B. H. and Anthony Pitts, the first of whom deceased before the Association. Will not the friends of Zion mourn while they record the death of three watchmen, sound in doctrine, tender hearted, zealous and laborious? And will not the Churches send the Lord of the harvest, to send other labourers into his vineyard?

14. The Circular letter, prepared by brother Collins, was read, and some alterations being made, was adopted.

15. Appointed brother S. King to write the letter to corresponding Associations.

16. Appointed messengers to sister Associations, viz: brethren Collins, Geo. W. King and [unclear], to the Mississippi, and the brethren Robertson and [unclear], to the Union.

17. Resolved, that we correspond with the Beckbee Association by letter.

18. Appointed brother Geo. W. King to write the Circular letter for the next year.

19. Appointed brother Geo. W. King to preach our next introductory sermon, and, in case of failure, brother S. King.

20. Brother Cooper prayed, and the Association adjourned to Tuesday, 10 o'clock, A. M.

Tuesday 10 o'clock.

Assembled and continued business as follows:
Brother Thigpen prayed.

21. Read the corresponding letter, prepared by brother S. King, which has unanimously adopted.

22. Took into consideration the petition from the Union Church, on which it was

Resolved, that the Churches be requested to state in their letters annually, how many copies of our Minutes they wish to have; and that the ballance of the money sent to the Association, over the amount necessary to pay for the said number of copies, shall pass into the Association Fund.

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23. Took up the petition from the New-Capel Church, on which it was

The Pearl River Baptist Association, to the Churches they represent, send Christian salutation.

BELoved BRETHREN;

Having promised you, in our last year's Minutes, a Circular Address on the discipline of the gospel, we first call your attention to the great interest the Churches have in the right exercise of this subject, and to the greatness of the subject itself. In receiving and exercising the discipline of the gospel, more depends, than on any other practical doctrine contained in the New Testament. Before we take up this subject, it may be proper to state, that a letter of ordinary length will not be sufficient to investigate a subject of such vast importance; and we, therefore, feel ourselves at liberty to extend our letter according to its magnitude, and the importance of the object in view.

The object of this address is not to argue the propriety of the discipline of the gospel; but to propose a GOSPEL DISCIPLINE, and the right exercise of it in the Church of Christ. Therefore let us notice

1ST A TRUE AND ORDERLY GOSPEL CHURCH.

God, in every age, has had, has, and will have a church or people in the world, consisting of a greater or less number, and subsisting in various forms and in diverse circumstances, Acts 7. 38. Eph. 3. 21.

26. *Resolved.* That the Association recommend the appointment of Union meetings on every fifth Sabbath in the year; and that four of these meetings be held on each side of Pearl River, to be arranged by the ministering brethren among themselves.

27. Recommended to the Churches the observance of the first day of January next, as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer for the out pouring of the Spirit on all flesh, a more general revival of religion, and the divine blessing on the operations going forward for the spread of the gospel.

28. Recommended to the Churches the religious observance of the *Fourth of July*; the Churches are requested to meet at their respective meeting houses, and where the ministering brethren can attend, that they have a sermon delivered, and where no minister can attend, that the members of the Church meet and spend the day in thanksgiving, prayer and praises for the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

29. This Association conceiving that there are important objects to be accomplished, by the propagation of the pure doctrines of the gospel, by the general circulation, & sending abroad of the *Word of God*, by promoting intelligence in the ministry, and likewise, by drawing more closely, preserving and continuing the ties of brotherly love and union between sister Associations, by preventing innovations in practice and heresies in doctrine; and believing it very desirable to concen-

trate the means and the wisdom of all the Associations in this State for the accomplishment of these objects. Therefore

12. Received a letter of correspondence from the Beckbee Association, which was read with great satisfaction; but their messengers failed to attend. Brother David Cooper, the messenger from the Mississippi Association, received the right hand of fellowship, was invited to a seat, and his assistance earnestly solicited; the letter read.

13. The Association offer tribute of respect to the memory of three labourers in the Lord's vineyard, Rev. Messrs. William Whitehead, John B. Hall and Anthony Pitts, the first of whom deceased before the Association. Will not the friends of Zion mourn while they record the death of three watchmen, sound in doctrine, tender hearted, zealous and laborious?—And will not the Churches praise the Lord of the harvest, to send other labourers into his vineyard?

14. The Circular letter, presented by brother Collins, was read, and some alterations being made, was adopted.

and distribution of 850 copies of these Minutes; and Ordered, That he draw on the Treasury to defray the expense; and receive fifteen dollars for his services.

33. Appointed the next Association to be at the meeting house of Antioch Church, Madison county, to convene on the Saturday before the second Sabbath in September, 1824.

After congratulation, encouragement and exhortation, "to continue diligently in the same holy obedience unto the end;" and uniting in singing an appropriate hymn, and joining in solemn prayer, (all offered by the Moderator, in much fervency of spirit,) the Association adjourned.

(Signed by order of the Association)

DAVID COLLINS, Moderator,
SHERMAN KING, Clerk.

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The whole Church of God, considered collectively, in all ages, forms one complete and glorious body, Cant. 6. 9. called Christ's mystical body, of which he is the Head, Col. 1. 18. Eph. 1. 22. This is the general assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in Heaven, Heb. 12. 23.

Under the Old Testament dispensation, the Church was generally confined to family or nation; but under the present administration, Christ gathers to himself a people from all nations, Math. 28. 19, 20. And being thus gathered, by the power of Christ in the gospel, it becomes their duty to unite in distinct Churches, Acts 2. 41, 47, that they may walk together in *all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless*. Hence we find, that under the gospel, Churches were settled wherever there was a sufficient number of converts for that purpose, Rev. 2 and 3 Chapters.

A particular gospel Church consists of, a number of Saints incorporated by a special covenant, into one distinct body, and meeting together in one place for the enjoyment of fellowship with each other, and with Christ, their Head, in all his institutions, to their mutual edification, and the glory of God through the Spirit, 2d Cor. 8. 5. Acts 2. 1.

2. The temple of the Lord is not to be built with dead, but living materials; 1st Pet. 2. 5. None have a right to Church membership, but such as Christ will own as his sincere followers, at the last decisive day, whatever pretensions they may make to an interest in his favour, Math. 7. 22, 23. Except a man is born again, he has no right to enter into the kingdom of God, or into a gospel Church, John 3. 3. Christ is a living Head, and will have none but living members in his mystical body, John 15. 6.

3. The constitution of Churches is plainly supposed, Acts 2. 47. Math. 18. 17, &c. And it is necessary, in order that the disciples of Christ may enjoy the ordinance of the Lord's supper, which is a Church ordinance, watch over one another, warn the unruly, and lay censures on disorderly and impenitent persons.

The scriptures do not absolutely determine the number of persons necessary to constitute a Church; but as our Lord has said, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Math. 18. 20. it should

seem as if that number of godly persons might, at least in some urgent cases, form a Church essential, though not a Church complete, or duly organized, for lack of officers. Experience has sometimes proved, that such small beginnings have been succeeded with a large increase, consistent with that encouraging promise, Isa. 60. 22. "A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation."

A gospel Church is not national, but congregational. This was evidently the case in the apostolic age; hence, Paul sent a general epistle to the several Churches in Galatia, Gal. 1. 1, 2. Our Lord, himself, ordered apostles to be written to the seven distinct Churches in Asia, Rev. 2 and 3 Chapters.

With regard to the manner of constituting a Church, it must be by the consent and desire of the parties concerned; and, it will be expedient to call a minister or ministers, if to be had, to assist on that important occasion. The parties being met fasting, the meeting is not to be opened by fervent prayer to God, Phil. 4. 6. next a sermon, suited to the occasion, should be preached; and then for the mutual satisfaction of every individual, a strict enquiry should be made into their experience of a work of grace on their hearts, their soundness in the doctrines of faith, and the godliness of their lives and conversation; unless as members of other Churches, they come honourably recommended for that purpose. Being thus satisfied, each others graces and qualifications, and united in love, they should give themselves to the Lord and to one another by the will of God, 2d Cor. 8. 5. by subscribing a written covenant, consistent with the word of God, Isa. 44. 5. thereby binding and obliging themselves to be the Lord's, to walk in all his commandments and ordinances, and in all respects to behave towards each other as brethren, agreeably to the spiritual relation into which they are now entered. Being thus united in one body, under Christ, their Head, they become, and are to be deemed a church essential, founded on the gospel plan. Let them then ratify their engagements by a participation of the Lord's supper, and so conclude the constitutional meeting.

4. A Church thus constituted, has the keys or power of government in herself, having Christ for her Head, and his law for her rule. She has the power and privilege of choosing her own officers, Acts 6. 3. cap. 13. 2, exercising her own discipline, Math. 18. 17, and administering the word and ordinances, for the edification and comfort of her members, Acts 2. 46. All which, with every other act of discipline, each distinct church may exercise without being subject to the cognizance of any other Church, presbytery, synod, or council, whatever, 1st Cor. 5. 12. Mat. 18. 17.

Churches being vested with such power, ought to use it with prudence, lest they dishonour Christ and his cause, or offend their fellow members. 1st Cor. 10. 31, Rom. 15. 2, to guard against which, business should be debated calmly and deliberately, with humility and meekness, so that, if possible, the members may be unanimous in all their determinations. Nevertheless, when this unanimity cannot be had, the majority, or the male members may determine; and the minority, if consistent with Christ's law, ought to submit. This appears not only from that general rule, Eph. 5. 21, submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God; but more clearly from 2d Cor. 2. 6, sufficient to many, which supposes the greater part. But in all Church matters (immorality and heresy excepted) the minority, in a Church, should have the privilege of the advice of help from sister Churches, to be chosen by the parties concerned, Acts 15. 27.

Female members may, when called on, act as witnesses in the Church, and, when aggrieved are to make known their case in person, or by the Moderator of the Church, and, in all matters touching fellowship, are to have a voice; but in the immediate rule and government of the Church, they should take no part.

The ordinary ministers and officers, such as 11, who were called for the confirmation.

1. Ministers and teachers. Tit. 1st Pet. 5. 1, 2. office in the Church pointed out in 1st souls, and are for choosing men to, being born again conversations, as by God, and to be Tim. 3. 2, Rom. 9.

A church having if there be any, the ministry. If a son; and if he prove the public. After fruit, let him be a sacred function, Church, it is the duty of a person, who is accepted a call from the may choose him in like manner, Acts

The candidate shall claim him in the fold be called to assist 13/2, 3. chap. 14. fied with the gifts, version of the car his ordination, a willingness and inv a public confession hands on his head, try, 1st Tim. 4. 14 Gal. 2. 9, and one have himself in the word of God, as his ed by payer, and a

A minister being and baptize believers may call him. But if of any particular Churchers must give themselves work of the ministry be workmen that need to feed the Lord's flock view of bringing souls

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2NDLY, OF CHURCH OFFICERS.

The ordinary officers of the Church, and the only ones now existing, are ministers and deacons, Phil. 1. 1. In the first gospel Churches there were other officers, such as Apostles, Prophets, and Evangelists, 1st Cor. 12. 28. Eph. 4. 11, who were endowed with extraordinary gifts, which were then necessary for the confirmation of the gospel; but are since become extinct.

1. Ministers of the gospel—who are frequently called elders, bishops, pastors and teachers, Titus 1. 5, compared with verse 7. Acts 20. 17, comp. verse 28.* 1st Pet. 5. 1, 2d John 1. 1, Cor. 12. 28, are appointed by Christ to the highest office in the Church; and therefore need peculiar qualifications—such as are pointed out in 1st Tim. 3. 2, 7, &c. Tit. 1. 5, 10. As they have the charge of souls, and are leaders in the house of God, Churches cannot be too cautious in choosing men to the ministerial function. They ought to be men fearing God, being born again of the Spirit, sound in the faith, and of blameless lives and conversations, as becometh the gospel of Christ, having fervent desires to glorify God, and to be instrumental in saving souls; John 3. 10, 2d Tim. 1. 13, 1st Tim. 3. 2, Rom. 9. 3, chap. 10. 1.

A church having no minister, should look among her own members, and see if there be any, who seem to have promising gifts and graces for the work of the ministry. If such a one be found, he is to be put on private trial for a season; and if he prove satisfactory to the Church, he may be called to preach to the public. After which, if his rod, like Aaron's, bud, blossom and bring forth fruit, let him be set apart by ordination, that he may perform every part of the sacred function, Acts 13. 2, 3. But should no such person be found in the Church, it is the duty of a sister Church to supply them, Cant. 8. 8. And if a person, who is a member of another church, be approved, and willing to accept a call from them, he must first become a member with them, so that they may choose him from among themselves, see Acts 1. 21. Deacons are chosen in like manner, Acts 6. 3.

The candidate having accepted the call of the Church, they proceed to ordain him in the following manner, viz: Two or more ordained ministers should be called to assist the Church. The day is set apart by fasting and prayer, Acts 13. 2, 3, chap. 14. 23. The ministers, called to assist the Church, being satisfied with the gifts, graces, soundness of principles and becoming life and conversation of the candidate; the Church being met, and giving their suffrage for his ordination, a sermon is to be preached on the occasion, and he declaring his willingness and inward call to take upon him the sacred office, 1st Cor. 9. 16, a public confession of his faith will be required: then the ministers lay their hands on his head, and by prayer set him apart to the great work of the ministry, 1st Tim. 4. 14. This done, they give him the right hand of fellowship, Gal. 2. 9, and one of the ministers gives him a charge or directory how to behave himself in the house of God, 2d Tim. 4. 1, 5, and presents him with the word of God, as his commission, 2d Tim. 3. 16, 17. The solemnity is concluded by prayer, and a blessing on the whole congregation.

A minister being ordained, has authority from Christ, to preach the gospel, and baptize believers in any part of the world, where God in his providence may call him. But if he should be called unto, and accept the pastoral charge of any particular Church, he will be bound to them, and they to him. Ministers must give themselves to study, prayer, and meditation, and attend to the work of the ministry with all diligence, 1st Tim. 4. 14, 15, 16, that they may be workmen that need not to be ashamed, 2d Tim. 2. 15, chap. 4. 2. They are to feed the Lord's flock with spiritual bread, Acts 20. 28, to preach with the view of bringing souls to Christ, and not for the sake of filthy lucre. They are

* The Apostle said to the elders, "Take heed to all the flock, over which, the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, or (as it is in the original) bishops."

not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be patient and tender hearted, 2d Tim. 2. 25. They are to watch over the flock, 1st Thes. 5. 14, and to sound the alarm to the world, 1st Cor. 10. 17. They should visit the flock, committed to their charge, to know the state of their soul, that they may speak a word in season, and especially to visit the sick, and those otherwise afflicted, Ezek. 34. 4, James 5. 14, Math. 25. 43, 45.

They are to administer the ordinance of the word of God, Heb. 8. 5, to preside in the affairs of the Church, Acts 20. 28, and to see that the discipline of the gospel is duly executed, Heb. 13. 7, 17. In a word, they are to be examples to the flock, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity, 1st Tim. 4. 12.

2. God has appointed, that deacons should be employed in the inferior services of the Church, Acts 6. 2; and their qualifications are laid down in Acts 6. 3, and 1st Tim. 3. 8, 13.

Deacons are likewise to be chosen by the suffrage of the Church, from her own members, and being first proved, are to be set apart to that office by prayer and the laying on of hands, Acts 6. 2, 6.

The office of a deacon is to relieve the minister from the secular concerns of the Church; hence they are called *Hellenists*. 1st Cor. 12. 28. — Their business is to serve tables, Acts 6. 2, as (1.) The table of the Lord, by providing the bread and wine for it; and receiving from the minister, when blessed, and distributing them to the members in the time of communion, Math. 26. 26, 28. (2.) They are likewise to collect each member's contribution for the Lord's house, and for the poor among God's people, and to apply it to their several wants, Acts 6. 1, 2; and, if their be- nevolence is not enough to relieve them, to make it known to the Church. (3.) The table of the minister, by taking care that he has a competent support; and it belongs to the deacon to have the oversight of the Church, as far as pertains to her secular concerns, to stir up, and exhort the brethren to a faithful discharge of their duties for if they put not into his hands, how shall he minister to the table of the Lord, the minister, and the poor?

If the minister be absent, the deacon is to be the moderator, at the church meetings: if not, the Church should choose her moderator for the time being, Acts 6. 2. The deacon, by a faithful discharge of his office, shall purchase to himself a good reward, and great boldness in the faith, 1st Tim. 3. 13.

3RDLY, ON RECEIVING MEMBERS INTO THE CHURCH.

1. A Church thus founded on the scriptures, ought to observe good order, as in all other cases, so also in the reception of members into her communion. They must be truly gracious persons, and have a right to Church privileges, but such as have experienced an entire change of nature, Math. 18. 5, "Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." by which is intended a gospel Church state as the context clearly shows. To the same purpose is John 3. 5, "Except ye be born of water and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." Christ's Church is a spiritual house, built of lively stones, i. e. of living souls, 1st Pet. 2. 5, 6. By nature we are dead in trespasses and sins, and Christ doth not place such dead materials in his spiritual building. It is certain the Ephesian Church was not composed of such materials, Eph. 2. 1. The members of the Church at Rome, were the called of Jesus Christ, Rom. 1. 6, called out of darkness, called to be saints, Rom. 1. 7, as the Church at Corinth, 1st Cor. 1. 2, and the Churches in general are called Churches of the saints, 1st Cor. 14. 33. The members of the Church at Colosse, are denominated in Christ, Col. 1. 2 or true believers in Christ, Acts 8. 37. Without faith we cannot discern the Lord's Body in the

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supper, consequently must eat and drink unworthily. 1st Cor. 11: 29. Indeed without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11: 6.

All persons received into the Church should have a good degree of the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. They should not only know themselves, as by nature, lost, and that they are saved by, and through the Lord Jesus Christ; but they should know something of the nature of God, his perfections and works, and of Christ in his person, as the Son of God; of his proper deity; of his incarnation; of his offices, as prophet, priest, and king; of justification by his righteousness; pardon by his blood; satisfaction by his sacrifice; and of his prevalent intercession. They should also have some knowledge of the Spirit of God, his person, operations and offices, and of the important truths of the gospel, and doctrines of grace; or how otherwise should the Church be the pillar and ground of the truth? 1st Tim. 3: 15. Their lives and conversation ought to be such as become the gospel of Christ. Phil. 1: 27, that is holy, just and upright, Psal. 15: 1, 2, and if their practice contradicts their profession, they are not to be admitted to church membership; for holiness becomes the house of the Lord forever, Psal. 93: 5.

They ought to be truly baptized in water, i. e. by immersion, on a profession of their faith, agreeably to the practice of John the Baptist and the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, Math. 3: 6. John 3: 23. Rom. 6: 4. Acts 8: 36, 38. It is allowed by all, that baptism is essential to church communion, and ought to precede it; and there is not one instance in the word of God of any being admitted without it. The three thousand penitents, after they gladly received the word, were baptized; and then, and not before, were added to the Church. So the Church at Samaria, consisted of men and women baptized by Philip, they believing what he said concerning the kingdom of God. Lydia and her household, and the jailor and his, being baptized on a profession of their faith, laid the foundation of the Church at Philippi. The Church at Corinth was begun by persons who hearing the word, believed and were baptized; and the Church at Ephesus was first formed by some disciples baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 2: 41, and 8: 12, and 18: 15, 33, and 19: 8, and 19: 5. So the members of the Churches at Rome, Galatia and Colosse were baptized persons, Rom. 6: 3, 4. Gal. 3: 27. Col. 2: 12.

2. Persons making application for admission into the Church, should undergo an examination before the Church, in order to satisfy each member concerning their gracious state; and should some of the members not be satisfied, their reception, should be postponed until another meeting. In the intermediate time, the disaffected member or members should labour with the candidate for fellowship; and, if fellowship cannot be had, the disaffected member or members should make known their objections to the Church, and submit the conclusion to the Church; and in such case the Church should not act over the head of any, but lay the case over until gospel fellowship be had by every member in the Church. 1st Tim. 6: 12. When a Church concludes, that the person, applying for membership, may be admitted, the minister, if there be one in the Church, if not the moderator should acquaint him or her with the rules of God's house, and, upon his or her promising, covenanting and agreeing strictly to observe them, as as-is-ed by the Spirit of the Lord, the minister or Moderator is to give him or her the right hand of fellowship, in behalf of the Church, and receive him or her into union and full communion with that particular Church; by which he or she becomes entitled to all the rights and privileges thereof. Col. 2: 19. Rom. 15: 7, 2d Cor. 8: 5.

If a member should desire transient or occasional communion in any Church to which he does not belong, if it be well known that he is an orderly member belonging to a sister Church he may be admitted to the Lord's table; but should have nothing to do with the government of the Church, unless his ad-

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ON CHURCH MEMBERS.

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them distinguishing honour and reverence; and are to hold them in reputation as the ambassadors of Christ, Phil. 2. 29, and to esteem them highly for their work's sake, 1st Thes. 5. 13. (2) They are to contribute according to their respective abilities, towards their minister's support, Gal. 6. 6, that being freed as much as possible, from the cares of life, they may wholly devote themselves to the work of the ministry, and have it in their power to use hospitality, 1st Tim. 3. 2, and stretch out the benevolent hand of charity to the poor in distress, Gal. 2. 10, which maintenance ought not to be considered as a gratuity, but as a just debt due the minister of Christ and the servant of the Church. The law of God, in the nature of things, requires it, 1st Tim. 5. 18. In the Lord's grants to Israel there was always a reserve made for the priests; and, under the gospel, provision is made for its ministers, 1st Cor. 9. 7, 14; and members that obey not this rule are transgressors against God, and the ministry of the gospel. (3) They are, in the love and fear of God to obey and submit themselves to their ministers, in all things, that are right, Eph. 6. 18, 20.—(4) They ought to stand by and assist them in all their troubles and afflictions, 2 Tim. 4. 16. Job 6. 14. (5) To receive no accusation against them without full proof, 1st Tim. 5. 19. (6) Nor to expose their infirmities, Acts 23. 5. 3d John 10. (7) To follow their example as far as they follow Christ, 2 Thes. 3. 7. 1st Cor. 11. 1.

2. Deacons holding an honorable office in the Church, the members are, (1) to respect and esteem them, as being employed by the Lord to serve in the household of faith; and as men, whom (if faithful) God will greatly honor and bless, 1st Tim. 3. 13. Math. 25. 21: (2) to submit to their godly and friendly admonitions, 1st Cor. 16. 16: (3) to encourage them in their office, by cheerful and liberal contributions for the service of God's house, his ministers and poor, 2d Cor. 9. 6, 7.

3. The members of a Church are bound in duty, (1) to love all men, but especially to love and to do good to *them that are of the household of faith*, Gal. 6. 10, all must be done from a principle of love, 1st John 4. 7, 11, John 13. 34, 35: (2) to follow after things which make for peace, Rom. 14. 19, in order to which, they are to put the most favourable construction on words and actions that are doubtful, 1st Cor. 13. 7, to speak no evil one of another, Jam. 4. 11, and, to endeavour, by a disinterested and godly behaviour, to sow the fruit of righteousness in peace, Jam. 3. 18, carefully avoiding whisperings and backbitings, 2d Cor. 12. 20, not to be busy meddlers with the concerns of others, 2d Thes. 3. 11, not to take up an evil report against another, Acts 25. 16, nor do any thing through strife or vain glory, Phil. 2. 3: (3) to endeavour after each other's edification and growth in grace, 1st Thes. 5. 11. 2d Pet. 3. 18: (4) To pray for each other, Jam. 5. 16: (5) To visit each other, especially when sick, or otherwise afflicted, Acts 15. 36, Jam. 1. 27, and those visits ought to be improved to edification; therefore, they should spend their time in praying together, Psa. 34. 3, in godly conversation, Math. 3. 16, exhorting and encouraging each other, Heb. 3. 13. Psa. 55. 14, warning and admonishing one another, 1st Thes. 5. 14. Rom. 15. 14, ingenuously confessing their faults to one another, as far as christian prudence will permit, Jam. 5. 16, and administering all possible relief to the needy and distressed, Jam. 2. 15, 16: (6) To avoid, as much as possible, going to law with each other, 1st Cor. 6. 1, 7:—(7) To prefer marrying among themselves, as far as it may be done with prudence, Amos 3. 3. 2d Cor. 6. 14: (8) and to labour, to find out the cause of shyness in a brother, as soon as it is discovered, Math. 5. 23, 24, always taking the advice of our Lord in cases of trespass, Math. 18. 15, 16, 17. And if the case of trespass have to be brought before the Church, the member, who brings it, is not a party in the case, but only a witness; and the Church becomes the accuser in behalf of the aggrieved member: nor are other accusations to be

4. The duties of members to the Church are, (1) to pray for her peace and prosperity, and use their utmost endeavours to promote her welfare, Psa. 122. 6. 9. (2) They ought carefully to attend all Church meetings, whether for public worship, or business, Heb. 10. 25. (3) It is their duty to submit to the order and discipline of the Church, so far as is consistent with the word of God, Deu. 5. 1, Heb. 13. 17. (4) They are to employ their talents and freely bestow of their substance in the service of the Church, Rom. 12. 6. 8. (5) They must fully avoid jarings, contentions, and quarrels in the Church, 1st Cor. 10. 19. (6) They must not divulge any of the Churches secrets, Cant. 4. 11.

1. Rebuke, or admonition, is the lowest degree of Church censure. It is re-
proving an offender, pointing out the
fault, and exhorting him or her to
repentance, and praying, for him or her.
Other Church censures must be admin-
istered with christian prudence, 1 Tim. 1: 2,
Jam. 5. 19, 20, 2d Cor 13: 10. Gal. 6.
and, for a caution to others, verse 20.

2. Suspension, considered as a Church censure, is that act of a Church, by which an offending member, being found guilty, is set aside from office, from the Lord's table, and from the liberty of going, and voting in any case. By this act the staff *beauty* is broken, but the staff *bands*, Zech. 11. 10, 14, therefore as this censure doth not cut off the member from the Church, but only from communion with the Church; the suspended member is not to be accounted an enemy, but admonished as a brother, 2d Thes. 3. 14. Upon a credible profession of repentance, the censure is to be taken off, and the delinquent restored to all the privileges of the church.

This censure is to be administered in cases of crimes, which do not amount to high as to deserve excommunication, and which disturb the peace of the Church by janglings and divisions. (1) when a member breaks the Church's discipline, 1st Tim. 1. 6, cap. 6. 5, (2) when he withdraws from the Church without account of its wholesome discipline, notwithstanding loving admonition, 1st Tim. 5. 10, (3) when he leaves his seat at the Lord's table, for the sake of another member, with whom he is offended, & neglects to do his duty by him as directed, Math. 18. 15, (4) when a member speaks in favour of heretical principles, 1st Tim. 3. 10, (5) when he, through sloth, neglects the duties of life, 1st Tim. 5. 8, (6) when he is a busy, tattler and backbiter, 1st Tim. 5. 13, (7) when he has committed a gross crime, but gives some signs of repentance, he is to be sus-

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The subject of the atrocious crimes, sundry aggravated in their nature, most evidently that are against 17; (2) All that those laws are 1st Pet. 2. 13; and expose the black catalogue 9, 15, and indefinitely dispiriting have been used in the highest class, if no means, to be our Lord's reading repeated and a the offender repeated which Cample which C

No member that power by member comes Before excommunicated and private offenders the spirit in the These, dear used in the Church

peoded, that the Church may have time to judge of his sincerity. 1st John 4. 1.
(8) when a company of members break covenant obligations, and set up for themselves, over the head of the Church, being deaf to the labours and admonitions of the majority: Such are truce breakers, and dispisers of those that are good, 2d Tim. 3. 3. In a word, all such cases, with many others of like nature, should be suspended; and, if persisted in until the patience of the Church can no longer bear, they should be excommunicated.

3. As excommunication is an ordinance of Christ to be exercised by the Church, and, in its own nature very important, awful and tremendous, it is highly necessary that churches should understand its nature.

Excommunication is a censure of the highest degree; it is a judicial act of the Church, by which she cuts off, and entirely excludes an unworthy member from union and communion with the Church; and from all the rights and privileges thereof. "It is a disfranchizing from all the immunities of a fellow citizen with the saints, and taking away a place and a name in the house of God."

This censure, awful as it is, respects only the spiritual concerns of a man, as related to the Church; and does, by no means, affect his temporal estate, or civil affairs. It does not subject him to fines, imprisonment, or death; nor does it interfere with the business of the civil magistrate; nor break in on the relations of man and wife, parents and children, masters and servants; nor does it prevent any from attending the external ministry of the word.

The act of excommunication is expressed by various phrases in the sacred scriptures, as, by avoiding familiar conversation with such, Rom. 16. 17, by not keeping company with them, 1st Cor. 5. 9, Eph. 5. 11, purging out from the Church, the old leaven, 1st Cor. 5. 7, by putting away the wicked from among them, 1st Cor. 5. 13, by withdrawing from disorderly persons, and cutting them off from fellowship with the saints, 2d Thes. 3. 5, Gal. 5. 12.

The subjects of this ordinance are members who are guilty of *notorious and atrocious crimes*; which are so, either in their own nature, or by means of sundry aggravations. There are some crimes so high and pernicious in their nature, that they call for speedy excommunication, unless the most evident marks of repentance appear in the offender, as (1) all sins that are against the letter of the ten commandments, Rom. 7. 12, Math. 5. 17; (2) All that call for severe corporal punishment from human laws, provided those laws are not contrary to the laws of God, Prov. 8. 15, Rom. 13. 1, 4, 1st Pet. 2. 13, 14. (3) All such sins as are highly scandalous in their nature, and expose the Church to contempt, 1st Tim. 5. 24, 1st Cor. 5. 2. We find a black catalogue of sins, which call for this censure, in 1st Cor. 5. 11, chap. 6. 9, 15, and indeed, for sins of an inferior nature, when aggravated by contumaciously despising the authority of the Church (after the more gentle censures have been used) excommunication ought to take place. But an offender of the highest class, if he give satisfactory evidence of evangelical repentance, is, by no means, to be excommunicated, see John 3. 11. Peter also is an instance of our Lord's readiness to forgive penitents: Peter fell foully, his crime was horrid, repeated and aggravated; yet our great FATHER admonished him with a look; the offender repented; the penitent was forgiven. Let Churches follow the example which Christ has set them.

No member has a right to excommunicate himself; for the Church alone has that power by the authority of Christ. It is by the consent of the Church a member comes in, and, by the consent of the Church, a member must go out. Before excommunication, all gospel steps should be used, both with a public and private offender; and the Church should endeavour much, for the unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace in this awful decision.

These, dear brethren, are our views on the discipline of the gospel, exercised in the Church of Christ; and the great objects to be obtained by observ-

ing these practical doctrines of gospel discipline, are uniformity, unanimity and similarity, peace and harmony throughout the Churches. Suffer us then, dear brethren, to exhort you by the mercy of God, to think on these things; and let each one so govern himself, that he may be happy in the social government of all. And, we pray the blessing of God to accompany this letter, and make it profitable to those who need instruction, for the sake of the blessed REDEEMER, AMEN.

SHADRACH KING, *Clerk.*

DAVIS COLLINS, *Moderator.*

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MINUTES

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OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

CONVENED AT THE MEETING HOUSE

OF

ANTIOCH CHURCH.

MARION COUNTY, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE

Eleventh day of September, 1824.

PORT-GIBSON, MISS.

PRINTED BY JAMES CORNELL.

1824.

Salem, 7/12
 Society Hill
 Tulahe, Perry
 Union, Pike
 Zion, Wayne
 Heppabon, Lawrence

FRANCIS WALKER, John Evans
 DAVIS COLLINS, John Stephens
 Jesse Setters, John Moffet
 Solomon C. Carey, James Carr
 Henry Chambers, Jacob Collins
 Abel Stricker, Josiah Stringer.

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STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Ordained Ministers' names are in small capitals. Licensed Preachers' in *Italic*. An asterisk (*) denotes absence. And a dash (—) is fixed to churches not represented.

CHURCHES & COUNTIES.	NAMES OF DELEGATES.	Baptized.	Rec'd by letter.	Dismiss'd by letter.	Excommunicated.	Restored.	Deceased.	Total in fellowship.	Contributions.	Times of Church Meeting.
Antioch, Marion	JAMES THOMPSON, Alfred G. Moore	3	1	1	1	1	43	6 25	3d	Lord's Day.
Antioch, Coalington	John Boudin, Spencer R. Bankston	3	1	1	1	1	43	6 25	3d	4th
African	Rob	3	1	1	1	1	43	6 25	3d	1st
Beque Chitto, Pike	SHADRACK COXER, John Warren	3	1	1	1	1	43	6 25	3d	1st
Bethany, Lawrence	George Granberry, Wm. Mullins	2	8	11	1	1	67	6	3d	2nd
Bethany, Lawrence	JAMES BAYLEY, William Smith	3	4	21	1	1	25	2	3d	2nd
Bethany, Lawrence	Thomas Tillman	1	1	1	1	1	16	2	3d	2nd
Chickasaw, Green	JAMES POWELL, Samuel Patton	1	1	1	1	1	46	4	4th	2nd
Dillon's Creek, Marion	ANNAH HARTER, Eliza Sullivan	4	10	2	1	1	32	50	4th	2nd
Ebenezer, Lawrence	John Applewhite, Joel Faderick	7	2	1	1	1	39	5	1st	1st
Fair Rivers, Lawrence	JOHN T. MARTIN, Geo. Burket	3	4	14	1	1	42	5	1st	1st
Friendship, Pike	JOHN HARRY, Samuel Cook	6	2	11	1	1	68	5	4th	1st
Hall Moon Bluff, Wash. Per La.	ZACHARIAH ROEYES, Joseph C. Butler	1	2	1	1	1	25	2	3d	2nd
Hebron, Lawrence	NATHAN MONROE, Joseph C. Butler	1	2	1	1	1	20	1	2nd	1st
Hebron, Lawrence	WILLIAM KORTIS, Wm. E. McCall	8	14	17	1	1	30	5	1st	1st
Mount Nebo, Green Parish, La.	Wiley Wroten, Gray Jordan	10	2	4	1	1	22	62	1-2	1st
Mount Moriah, Lawrence	Reuben Vaughn, Thos. Mathews	11	7	1	1	1	29	1	1st	1st
Mount Zion, C. p. ch.	Drury Hodge, Hookery Drigler	4	7	5	1	1	20	3	75	1st
New Chapel, Pike	JOEL BULLOCK, Willis Mace	5	7	2	1	1	44	5	70	1st
New Zion, Marion	HARMON RUMBLE, Wiley White	5	2	5	1	1	16	5	2nd	2nd
Pearl River, Lawrence	BRITTON BRIDGERS, Joshua B. Lowe	1	2	2	1	1	3	26	1-4	2nd
Providence, Marion	NORA, ROBERTSON, G. Granberry	1	4	7	1	1	24	3	1-4	1st
Silver Creek, Pike	LEGATIUS DUDEN, John Bousley	1	1	3	1	1	28	2	2nd	2nd
Silver Creek, Lawrence	NATHAN SANDERS, Thomas Carlisle	1	1	3	1	1	28	2	2nd	2nd
Sweetwater, Perry	HENRY EASTERLEN, James Cowart	6	5	9	1	1	28	1	75	2nd
Salem, Wayne	FRANCIS WALKER, John Evans	1	1	1	1	1	17	3	2nd	2nd
Society Hill	DAVIS COLLINS, John Stephens	1	1	1	1	1	17	3	2nd	2nd
Talabala, Perry	JANE SERRIER, John Moffet	9	2	5	1	1	34	4	2nd	2nd
Union, Pike	SOLOMON CRAWLEY, James Carr	1	3	9	1	1	27	4	2nd	2nd
Zion, Wayne	HENRY CLARKER, Jacob Collins	1	5	1	1	1	27	4	2nd	2nd
Hezbollah, Lawrence	Abel Stinger, Josiah Stinger	10	4	14	1	1	45	5	2nd	2nd

RECAPITULATION.—Baptized 101—Received by letter 100—Dismissed by letter 159—Excommunicated 23—Restored 5—Deceased 12—Total in fellowship, 1052—and three churches not represented—Contributions from the churches composing the Association, \$111 01 14—Bethlehem 1 00. Price for printing, folding & stitching, \$40.

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MINUTES

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

Saturday, 11th September, 1824.

1st. In consequence of the absence of Brother George W. King, who was appointed to preach the Introductory Sermon, and the death of Brother Shadrack King, who was appointed in case of failure, a discourse was delivered by Brother Norvall Robertson, at half past eleven o'clock, from Solomon's Songs, 8, and 8—"We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts: What shall we do for our sister in the day which she shall be spoken for?"

2d. Brother Collins opened the Association with singing and prayer.

3d. Read the letters from the Churches, minuted their state, and enrolled the names of their Delegates.

4th. A letter was presented from the church at Society Hill, by their messengers, Rev. Davis Collins and brother John Stevens, soliciting admission into this body, which was cordially received.

5th. Chose brother D. Collins Moderator, and brother Alfred G. Moore Clerk.

6th. Our circular letter for the present year having failed, on request brother Collins consented to prepare one.

7th. Appointed the brethren Norvall Robertson, John P. Martin, and Nathan Morris, with the Moderator and Clerk, to arrange the business of the session.

8th. The Antioch Church appointed the brethren Asa Mercer, Charles Felder, and Davis Collins, to preach, and brother Martin to conclude with exhortation, on the Lord's day, to commence at 10 o'clock A. M. The brethren preached in the order of their names, to a very large and attentive congregation. So interesting were the subjects of discussion, such were the energy, arguments and zeal of the Ministers, and such was the effect that appeared in the congregation, that we hope good was done. *To God alone be all the praise.*

9th. Brother Martin prayed; and the Association adjourned to Monday 10 o'clock A. M.

Monday, 9 o'clock; Sept. 13th.

Met and proceeded to business as follows:

Brother Collins prayed.

10th. The committee of arrangement made their report; which was received, and they were discharged.

11th. Received petition for admittance into our union, from the churches Bethlehem and Bethesda; the former rejected, and the latter received, and the right hand of fellowship was given to their delegate, and he invited to a seat with us.

12th. Received a letter of correspondence from Union, by brother Elisha Flower: The letter was read with great satisfaction and the right hand of fellowship was given brother Flower, and he was invited to a seat, and his assistance solicited.

Brother Charles Felder appeared as a Delegate from the Mississippi Association, and was cordially received; from whom we received information that brethren Cooper, Marsh and Irion were appointed with him; but had failed—to-

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gether with the letter of correspondence and minutes at their last session.

Received an address from the Board of Managers of the General Convention of the Baptist denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, &c. which was read and ordered to be transferred to the Mississippi State Convention.

13th. On motion made, the constitution of the State Convention was read; and on the question taken, for this Association to become a member of said Convention, it was decided in the affirmative by a large majority; and delegates appointed to represent us in that body—consisting of brethren D. Collins, N. Robertson, J. Thigpen, N. Morris, J. P. Martin, S. Coaker and David Cleveland.

14. Took up a query from Mount Zion church, and voted it out.

15. A query from Silver Creek church, viz. Is the forcible separation of man and wife among our slaves, by their masters, contrary to their will, sufficient excuse for them to marry again?

Answered in the negative.

Query 2d from the same church voted out.

16. Appointed brother A. G. Moore to write the letter to corresponding associations.

17. Appointed messengers to sister associations, viz. brethren Davis Collins and Shadrack Coaker to Miss—Irel Harrey and Absalom Harper to Union.

18. *Resolved*, That we correspond with the Becklen Association by letter.

19. Appointed brother Collins to draft a gospel form for the constitution of churches, to be presented at the next session; in case of failure, brother Norvall Robertson.

20. The Bula church not representing herself for two sessions past, a committee was appointed

to enquire the reason, and report, Davis Collins being one of the committee, report favorable.

21. Appointed brethren Thigpen and Harvey to visit Mount Nebo, and labor to set them in order, and report to the next association—and brethren N. Morris and S. Coaker visit Baileychitto, and report in like manner.

22. The circular letter prepared by brother Collins was read and adopted.

23. Read and adopted the corresponding letter prepared by brother Meese.

24. The Association offer the tribute of respect to the memory of two laborers in the Lord's vineyard. Rev. Messrs. Sadrack King and Jacob Parker. Will not the friends of Zion mourn while they read the death of two watchmen, sound in doctrine, and zealous laborers? Should not the churches pray the Lord of the harvest to send more laborers into the vineyard?

25. Recommended to the churches in our connexion, the observance of the first day of January next, as a day of fasting and prayer to Almighty God for a general outpouring of his holy spirit upon the churches and his saints, and especially that he would regard the languishing condition of the churches of the state of Mississippi, and send forth more laborers into his vineyard.

26. Recommended to the churches the religious observance of the fourth of July; the churches are requested to meet at their respective meeting houses, and where the ministering brethren can attend, that they have a sermon delivered; and where no minister can attend, that the members of the church meet and spend the day in thanksgiving, prayer and praises for the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

27. Having experienced serious inconveniences

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in consequence of the failure of our circular letter, we adopt the following plan as a remedy in future, viz. appoint two persons to write circular letters, and also appoint them their subjects.

28. Appoint brother Norvall Robertson to write on the union of the churches.

29. Appoint brother Thigpen to write on the New Testament sacrifices, and the manner of offering them up.

30. Appoint brother J. P. Martin to preach our next introductory sermon; and in case of failure, brother S. Coaker.

Prayed, and adjourned until Tuesday 10 o'clock.

Tuesday, 10 o'clock, Sept. 14th.

31. Assembled, and continued business as follows:—

Brother Thigpen prayed.

Took into consideration the sectional division in the location of the association.

32. *Resolved*, That in appointing a place for the session, that the association act, as in all other business, by a committee of the whole.

33. *Resolved*, That the association reserve to herself the right of appointing the ministers to preach during the session.

34. *Ordered*, That the brethren Collins, Harper, Harvey, and Coaker, receive six dollars each for travelling expenses, as our messengers to Mississippi and Union Associations.

35. Collected the contributions from the churches to the amount of one hundred and twelve dollars one and a fourth cents.

36. Appointed brother A. G. Moore to superintend the printing and distribution of seven hun-

dred and forty copies of these minutes—and
Ordered, That he receive sixty dollars to defray
 the expense; and should it be insufficient to pay
 for the printing, &c. of the minutes, and his ex-
 pense, and one dollar per day for his services, that
 he draw on the treasury for that amount.

37. Recommended to the churches the expedi-
 ency of opening subscriptions in each church, to
 raise funds for the purpose of purchasing a suffi-
 cient number of copies of the Baptist faith.

Appointed the next association to be at the
 meeting house of Herten church, Lawrence coun-
 ty, to convene on the Saturday before the second
 Lord's day in September, 1825.

After admonition, encouragement, and consol-
 ation, addressed to the members of this body, by
 the Moderator, the Association was commended to
 the "Grace of God," and adjourned.

Signed by order of this Association,

DAVID COLLINS, *Mod'r.*

ALFRED G. MOORE, *clerk.*

CIRCULAR LETTER.

*The Pearl River Baptist Association, to the
 Churches she represents; sends brotherly
 love and christian salutation.*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD,

In this address we propose various subjects,
 in which the churches are greatly interested. We
 have had a pleasing interview, and we believe our
 meeting has been favored with much of the Divine
 presence, and blessing of the great head of the
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church letters, we have distressing cries of lamentation—because they are destitute of the station of the gospel among them, and the all additions made from year to year to their number: which complaints awaken in us much piteous concern and sympathy; and these emotions are daily increased by the frowning providence of our heavenly Father, in the removal of six or seven of our beloved brethren in the ministry, within the term of two years: some of whom a few months ago promised great usefulness to the churches, and our hopes and affections had taken hold of them; but they have faded from our sight in death. Others, whom we greatly love, are threatened with approaching and speedy dissolution; and we see they have finished their ministry. Add to this melancholy news, that few, very few, young ministers are raising up among us, and they labor under great discouragements from the signs of the times—crying, in the language of Elisha, the great prophet, here is the mantle, but where is the Lord God of Elijah? Moreover, when we enquire, are there no ministers of peace emigrating from our part of the vineyard—will the Lord send us help from afar? All these manifest tokens of God's displeasure, taken together, have grown into a tremendous cloud, portending great sorrow and trouble to the churches, by removing the candlestick of the gospel from among them. To spiritual judgments, it hath pleased God to add temporal judgments, sharp and long, by sending floods of water, until the people greatly murmur against God and their hearts. These are changed into burning heat and scorching drought, drying up the substance of the corn; and threatening famine to both soul and body. To the cause of these judgments, our brethren, we desire to turn your attention; for

with deep concern. We view them as tokens of our dear Redeemer's displeasure against his ministers or his people, or in part against both; and when other plagues he will send, or when and where they will end, we know not; but believing that they are sent to reclaim his people, they will not cease until the work be accomplished. Nor do we cease our complaints in the above objects, for we have prayed, preached, exhorted and invited apparently for nought; until our souls discouraged, our spirits broken, and our bodies much worn with fatigue and hard labour, had fainted long since, if the Lord had not said, "they that sow in tears shall reap in joy." And you will perceive that we are not only cast down and sorrowful, but much afraid—not that the arm of the Lord will fall, but that the cause of God's judgments is not known to his people; or if it be known, it is not laid to heart in a becoming manner, for if it were, surely the Lord would say, I will bless thee and afflict thee no more. Another cause of our fear is, that we may be too little regarded in pointing out the real cause of much of our afflictions and sorrows, for we fear that our circular letters are read with little or no concern by some, and not read at all by others, although it costs us much serious thought and labour. We also fear that our views are often censured and rejected, if they discord with your sentiments, scarcely giving yourselves time to examine whether we are right and you wrong, or otherwise. Likewise we fear that many are so much accustomed to living out of certain duties, that their hearts are hardened through coldness and blindness against them, and if admonished or exhorted to regard those duties, they rise up against the servants and commandments of the Lord. While others, thinking that little is required of them, they

are quiet with doing which they are best persuaded that they are here of action in the are governed by their God. Lastly, we have inculcated a ministers of the gospel the minds of their hearts Lord with their sorrow, and be thought in the way teach their hearts to the plain commandment proposed our fear of you what we chief cause of God's displeasure must point out what we may bring the prison. We are persuaded the word of God, the sabbath day, hinder the meeting of young men, love the brethren your doors for Christ's sake for points of the truth, submit to the Lord and keep in repair the believe of you, and the exercise of them; neither these offend the Lord we think it consists in the world. To convince you we pray you to hear now in any of you are so much set on the things there are in this association of two years past red brethren and sisters

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quiet with doing nothing of those duties
 which they are best qualified to discharge; being
 persuaded that they are at liberty to choose their
 sphere of action in the church; and that they are
 governed by their own will, & not by the will
 of God. Lastly, we fear, that certain duties are
 being inculcated and enforced by many of the
 ministers of the gospel—fearing that if they press
 the minds of their hearers the duty of honoring
 the Lord with their substance, they will give of-
 fence, and be thought lovers of filthy lucre; and in
 this way teach their hearers to live in disobedi-
 ence to the plain commandments of the Lord. Ha-
 ving proposed our fears, permit us next to lay
 before you what we conceive to be the great or
 chief cause of God's displeasure. In doing which,
 we must point out what we think is not the cause,
 that we may bring the real cause to view by com-
 parison. We are persuaded that you sing, pray,
 read the word of God, go to the house of the Lord
 on the sabbath day, hear the gospel with pleasure;
 attend the meeting of the church, live honestly a-
 mong men, love the brethren and preachers, and
 open your doors for christian visits; contend ear-
 nestly for points of faith, understand and know
 the truth, submit to the ordinances, and help build
 and keep in repair the meeting house: all these
 we believe of you, and love and praise you in the
 exercise of them; neither do we think that you in
 these offend the Lord. But there is a cause, and
 we think it consists in an inordinate love of the
 world. To convince you that our views are correct,
 we pray you to hear us, and be not angry, if we
 show in any of you an evil heart of covetousness,
 too much set on the things of this present world.
 While we are in this association, and have been for the
 space of two years past, between 8 and 12 hun-
 dred brethren and sisters; and many who are not

members of the church, that attend the preaching of the gospel, during which time the cause of religion has called aloud for your assistance in temporal means. Now say if this 10 or 12 hundred professors, with those who are friendly to the Baptist interest, were to contribute some 5, some some 3, and some to one dollar per year, it would raise between 1 and 5000 dollars per year, which would relieve 16 or 18 preachers among you and do great good in the promotion of other religious objects. But has this been done—or has the hearts of professors been set on uncertain riches? Likewise, in your temporal matters, you are willing to give the laborer the worth of his labor, but for gospel labor many are very sparing—the seem to sow sparingly, and reap sparingly; and their love to the gospel were to be measured by their contributions, it would seem as if they had little or no love to Christ and his gospel, or feeling for the wants of his servants. Also when there are demands of money to be religiously appropriated, many express a jealousy, and shew great backwardness in contributing, as if money were too good, or too dangerous a thing, to be religiously used; or that the ministers of the gospel were not to be trusted, and thus wounding the feelings of those who ought to be relieved of every improper and unnecessary burden. Lastly, we find the funds of the churches are too poor to relieve the wants of traveling ministers; they may travel and preach at their own expence, and many think they have done enough, if they give them a hearing. To this consider, when money is wanted for any religious purpose, with how much difficulty small collections are made. Now, dear brethren, with many of ourselves, have looked on this state of things, with languishing hopes in the address are struggling to rouse you to a sense

your duty, because integrity of heart not suffer them to we believe, that seek the riches cause of Christ engaged in many persuaded that ought to be done and you will take hand—believing gospel are unworthy out of duty as the gospel. But there in this duty; we we look at their donations, and We would next the poison, that weakens our hold on the goodness every one thinks and at all times; spare for the cause as much as we can and we need not commanded it; find that every one lity. Do we believe? Do we believe when he says, “to the Lord?” dollars? Can we he did not first give the gospel should kingdom of Christ to God? Then preach; and those

your duty, because we believe you have love and integrity of heart for Christ and his cause, & will not suffer them to expire at your door: neither can we believe, that you came to these wild forests, to seek the riches of this world only, and left the cause of Christ behind; no, we know you are engaged in many great and good works; and we are persuaded that you only need to be told what ought to be done, and how it ought to be done, and you will take hold of the work with heart and hand—believing that those who do not support the gospel are unworthy of the gospel, and as much out of duty as those who do not go to hear the gospel. But there are many who are not backward in this duty; we speak this to their praise, when we look at their meeting houses and other religious donations, and contributions for pious purposes. We would next point out the remedy for this subtle poison, that taints all our performances, and weakens our holy confidence. Let each one think on the goodness of God to him and his people, let every one think what the Lord gives at every time and at all times; let us ask ourselves what we can spare for the cause of God; let us resolve to spare as much as we can, for the Lord hath need of it—and we need not enquire of any whether he has commanded it; if we will read his word we shall find that every one is to give according to his ability. Do we believe the Lord loves a cheerful giver? Do we believe he is faithful to his promise, when he says, “he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord?” Can we trust the Lord with a few dollars? Can we give any thing to the Lord that he did not first give to us? Are we desirous that the gospel should run, and be glorified? The kingdom of Christ flourish, and souls be converted to God? Then let the preachers go forth and preach; and those that cannot preach, provide for

them, resolving to honor the Lord with your substance, as well as with your lips. The word of the Lord is full and clear on this point, and the amount stated that we are to give, each one according to ability, and this claimed not as charity, but demanded as a debt, and may be called the Lord's revenue; and if we render to God the things that are his, he will reckon us for them; but if not, he will reckon with us. Neither are we to withhold it for fear the Lord will make a bad use of it; no, let us pay, and leave it with the Lord to do as seemeth good to himself with his own treasure. Dear brethren, open your eyes, and let us ask you what you see? Do you not see a wide spread harvest, of destitute churches, unconverted neighborhoods, perishing millions, heathen tribes sinking in sin & ruin, and a world lying under the ravages & waste of sin; with here and there a wayworn messenger of peace, under all his toils and wants, moving toward thee with the glad tidings of salvation to all that repent and believe the gospel? Now ask yourself, is there nothing for me to do—have I no interest in this scene—can I contribute no means of relief to the servant of God, and thereby aid in the deliverance of these lost sinners; am I to be an idle spectator? You are now in full view of our object, placing these subjects before you; you are in view of your responsibility to God for your stewardship—and we pray God to give you wisdom and grace to know and do his will; that you may finish your course in righteousness, and give up your accounts with pleasure to the judge of quick and dead, and meet the approbation of the judge, who will say to the faithful, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.—AMEN.

Half moon bluff church
12 Cokes
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MINUTES

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION,

CONVENED AT THE MEETING HOUSE

OF

HEBRON CHURCH,

LAWRENCE COUNTY, STATE OF MISSISSIPPI,

ON THE

Tenth day of September, 1825.

JACKSON, MISS.

PRINTED BY PETER 1825

1825.

Society Hill,	D. Collins, J. Stephens,	1	5	11	37	3d.
Talulah, Perry,	Jessie Schiever, Giles Sumner,	1	1	1	24	2d.
Union, Pike,	James Carr, D. W. Welcher,	2	2	2	46	4th.
Zion, Wayne,					133	1st.
Bechtelheim, Pike,	D. Roberts, C. Wm. McDaniel,	8	4	2	23	
Bouye, Covington,	Francis Walker, E. Nichols,	4	1	2	31	
Copiah, Cepich,	John Sutton, Wyatt Hall,	4	1	1	27	4th.
					1 50	

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RECAPITUL
Excommunicate
Churches 895

STATE OF THE CHURCHES.

Ordained Ministers' names are in SMALL CAP-
TALS. Licensed Preachers' in *Italic*. An
asterisk (*) denotes absence. And a dash
(—) is fixed to churches not represented.

CHURCHES & COUNTIES	NAMES OF DELEGATES	Baptised.	Rec'd by Letter.	Dismiss'd by Let.	Excommunicated	Restored.	Dead.	Total in Fellowship.	Contributions.	Time of Church Meetings.
Antioch, <i>Martian</i> .	JAMES THORPE, (*) A. G. MOORE,	10	5	1	—	—	46	83	2	3d.
Antioch, <i>Corington</i> .	Isham HOGES, John C. THOMAS,	1	4	9	1	—	36	2	—	4th.
African.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1st.
Bogue Chitto, <i>Pike</i> .	S. COAKER, John Taylor,	3	1	2	2	—	1	22	356 1/4	1st.
Bailey Chitto.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2d.
Bula, <i>Lawrence</i> .	D. COOK,	4	6	—	—	—	1	14	1 50	3d.
Bethany, <i>Lawrence</i> .	William STAMPS, James BAGGET,	1	5	5	—	—	68	—	—	—
Bethesda, <i>Copiah</i> .	H. WALKER,	3	2	3	—	—	18	1	—	—
Chickasawha, <i>Green</i> .	JAMES POWELL, S. NEWTON,	4	2	1	—	—	22	4	—	4th.
Dillon's Creek, <i>Martian</i> .	William WARD, John APPLEWHITE	16	3	5	—	—	1	56	5	1st.
Ebenezer, <i>Corington</i> .	J. P. MARTIN, I. BRACKETT,	2	2	6	—	—	39	5	—	1st.
Fair River, <i>Lawrence</i> .	JOEL HARVEY, Richard ROSS,	1	2	2	—	—	1	68	3	4th.
Friendship, <i>Pike</i> .	JOEL MERRELL, Major GALLING,	3	1	3	1	—	24	3	—	3d.
Half Moon Bluff, <i>Wash. Pa. La.</i>	N. MORRIS, (*) WILLIAM MAGEE,	6	10	6	2	1	2	18	3	2d.
Hebron, <i>Lawrence</i> .	William MORRIS, Wm. B. McCall,	8	5	1	2	—	1	88	5	1st.
Hepsiha, <i>Lawrence</i> .	A. STRINGER, D. LANGSTON,	—	—	—	—	—	52	—	—	4th.
Mount Nebo, <i>Green, Pa. La.</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1st.
Mount Moriah, <i>Lawrence</i> .	G. BLOUNT, S. CHANDLER,	6	2	1	1	—	30	2	381 1/4	1st.
New Chapel, <i>Pike</i> .	Wm. McCULLUCK, J. M. McCULLUCK	1	3	4	—	—	9	38	3	2d.
New Zion, <i>Martian</i> .	Wm. EGGLEBERT, H. RYAL,	1	—	—	—	—	137	4	—	1st.
Pearl River, <i>Lawrence</i> .	H. RUNNELS, Wm. AKIN,	—	—	—	—	—	3	31	5	3d.
Pentecost, <i>Corington</i> .	J. B. LOWE, B. BIGGS,	5	1	3	2	—	35	3	—	2d.
Providence, <i>Martian</i> .	N. ROBERTSON, J. C. STEEL,	—	—	—	—	—	133	2	50	1st.
Silver Creek, <i>Pike</i> .	James CRAFT, Richard FORRELL,	—	—	—	—	—	1	26	1 50	3d.
Silver Creek, <i>Lawrence</i> .	Jessie ARMSTRONG, Wm. NALL,	3	—	—	—	—	24	1	37 1/2	2d.
Sweet Water, <i>Perry</i> .	A. SHAWBACH, J. TRUCKER,	—	—	—	—	—	37	3	—	3d.
Salem, <i>Wagner</i> .	J. EVANS, H. WALKER,	—	—	—	—	—	37	3	—	3d.
Society Hill.	D. COLLINS, J. STEPHENS,	—	—	—	—	—	1	24	3	—
Tahala, <i>Perry</i> .	Jessie SCHYER, Giles SUMMER,	1	5	1	—	—	46	4	—	2d.
Union, <i>Pike</i> .	James CART, D. W. WELCHER,	1	1	1	—	—	133	4	—	4th.
Zion, <i>Wagner</i> .	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1st.
Bethlehem, <i>Pike</i> .	D. ROBERTS, (*) Wm. McDaniel,	8	4	—	—	—	23	2	—	—
Bouye, <i>Corington</i> .	FRANCIS WALKER, E. NICHOLS,	—	—	—	—	—	31	3	—	—
Copiah, <i>Copiah</i> .	John SUTTON, Wyatt HALL,	4	1	1	—	—	27	1	50	4th.

RECAPITULATION — Baptised 90 — Received by Letter 69 — Dismissed by Letter 10.
Excommunicated 22 — Restored 5 — Dead 17 — Total in Fellowship 1103 — Received from the
Churches \$95 47. — Price for printing, folding and stitching these Minutes, \$50.

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MINUTES

OF THE

PEARL RIVER BAPTIST ASSOCIATION.

September 10th. 1825.

At eleven o'clock, A. M. brother Martin, pursuant of appointment, preached the Introductory Sermon, from Ephesians, 2d. chap. ver. 8th. 9th. and 10th.—"For by 'Grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Nor of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

The Association then convened, the letters from the churches were read and their delegates enrolled. Brother D. Collins was chosen Moderator, and brother A. G. Moore Clerk.

Brother E. Estes, delegate from the Mississippi Association, bearing thirty copies of their last Minutes and letter, was cordially invited to a seat with us. Brother E. Flower, delegated by the Union Association, together with a corresponding letter from the Beckbee, were also received with affectionate regard.

A committee of brethren Robertson, Collins, Moore, Estes and Martin, was appointed to arrange the business of the Association.

A committee of brethren William Morris, I. Brakefield and Nall, was chosen to select ministers to preach on Lord's day.

Agreed that brethren I. Brakefield, J. Harvey, and J. B. Lowe, audit the Treasurer's accounts, and report on Monday. Prayed, and adjourned.

Lord's Day, September 11.

At half past ten o'clock, brother E. Estes, agreeably to arrangement, preached from Gal. 5. 6. Brother Flower, from Psalms, 84. 10. Brother Collins, from Acts, 13. 38. 39.—Brother Martin delivered an impressive exhortation, and the assembly, truly great, retired in order.

Monday, September 12.

Met at nine o'clock. Prayer was offered, and then proceeded to business.

Appointed a committee to arrange the preaching for the day. Received and read the Report of the committee of arrangement.

The delegates from the Richem and Bouye Churches presented their letters, praying admission into our body—when read was received, and the right hand of fellowship given them, and invited to sit at with us.

The Stillwater brethren petition for a Presbytery to be appointed, for the ordination of brother Newton, and constitution of a church—which petition was received, and brethren Powell, Robertson and Martin appointed to attend them.

Read and adopted the Circular Letter prepared by brother Robertson.

The Letter prepared by brother Thigpen, (in case of failure) was received, and referred to him, with a request to enlarge it.

Agreed that we correspond with the Mississippi Union and Beckbee Associations, by delegates and letters; and that brethren Robertson, Collins and Martin bear the letter to Mississippi, and brethren Coaker, Harvey and Walker to Union, and brethren Powell and Chalmers to Beckbee.

Agreed that brother Isaac Blakefield write a Circular Letter on the Doctrine of SANCTIFICATION, for the next year.

Took up the Queries.

1st. From Beltsidea. Is it right for visiting members to vote on the trial of any member belonging to another Church? And if a member is voted out by members of other Churches when a large majority of the Church has not lost fellowship with him, is he legally excommunicated?

Answer in the negative.

Visiting members have no right to vote in a Church, except invited by the Church; and if invited, their vote should be considered valid.

2d. From Ebenezer. Do Baptist Churches permit their members to join the Masonic Lodge; or if members of that Lodge, to continue with them when they join the Church?

Answer. This Association does not presume to decide the merits or demerits of Masonry, but recommend a strict observance of the Gospel discipline among the Churches.

3d. From Silver Creek. Is it from Hepsidea—the same. Is the washing of feet a Gospel Ordinance? If so, when, and at what time?

Answer. The washing of feet is not considered by this Association a Gospel ordinance, but a Christian duty, of the social and private kind.

5th. From Half Moon Bay. Is it consistent with Gospel order for a Church to act in the reception or exclusion of a member—or in the administration of any of the ordinances of the Gospel, without an ordained minister at her head?

Answer. Yes. Sing especially in fellowship, and ship; but the ad per, belong exc 6th. From H preacher of our ing of a murder or making over Justice?

Answer. The particularly the the performance ty among the sa

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Answer. The both the tempora in the faith; and trines and ordinar in season to moun duty also, to sup to procure the nee report the needs relieve the pastor of the whole body

The Churches of dismission, for as more conveni Brethren Joel H visit Mount Nebo them in order, and Brother Roberts responding Associa The committee surer, report as fol Received sinc Expended s

Remaining Resolved, that th thanks to the forme land, for his long Agreed that bro for this Association

Answer. There are certain duties and privileges belonging especially to the Church—Such as receiving members to fellowship, and excluding disorderly members from fellowship; but the administration of Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, belong exclusively to ordained ministers.

6th. From Half-Moon Bluff. What shall be done with a preacher of our order, who entered security for the forthcoming of a murderer, said murderer absconding, and said preacher making over his property to others, to elude the force of Justice?

Answer. The Association deems it inexpedient to specify particularly the sanctions of civil law; but earnestly advises the performance of Justice towards all men, and humble piety among the saints. *Prayed, and adjourned.*

Tuesday, September 13.

Met agreeably to adjournment. Brother Robertson prayed.

Took up Query 7th. From Ebenezer. What are the various duties of a DEACON, in the Church of God?

Answer. The duties of a Deacon in a Church, respects both the temporal and spiritual concerns. He shall be sound in the faith; and vigilant in the maintenance of Gospel doctrines and ordinance. He should be ready to speak a word in season to mourners, and to comfort the fearful. It is his duty also, to superintend the pecuniary wants of the Church; to procure the necessary support of the minister; to know and report the needs of the poor of the Church; and in general, to relieve the pastor from the care of the temporal convenience of the whole body.

The Churches Mount Zion and Bahala petitioned for letters of dismission, for the purpose of joining Union Association, as more convenient—which letters were granted.

Brethren Joel Harvey and S. Croaker, were appointed to visit Mount Nebo Church—to aid (if wished by them) to set them in order, and to report at our next session their state.

Brother Robertson was appointed to write the letters to corresponding Associations, which were read and adopted.

The committee appointed to audit the accounts of the Treasurer, report as follows:

Received since November 6, 1820,	\$597 06
Expended since that time,	508 50

Remaining in hand,	\$88 56
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Resolved, that this Association acknowledge their grateful thanks to the former Treasurer of this Association, Col. Cleaveland, for his long and faithful services.

Agreed that brother Wiley White be appointed Treasurer for this Association in place of Col. Cleaveland resigned; and

that he be requested to report the state of the fund annually.

Agreed that brother Harvey be requested to call on Mrs. King the wife of our beloved and much lamented brother, S. King, deceased, for the books and papers belonging to this Association, and have them at the next session.

Requested that all Churches be particular to notice in their next letters, their minds with respect to the surplus funds being transferred to the Convention fund, for the support of the Gospel.

Received and read some documents from the General Baptist Convention, also an address from the Tract Society and Columbian College.

This Association recommends to the Churches the observance of the first day of January next, as a day of Humiliation, fasting and prayer to Almighty God, for the out-pouring of the Spirit on all flesh, and the spread of the Gospel—

Recommend the religious observance of Christmass, (the 25th of December) and the birth of July. The Churches are requested to meet at their respective Meeting Houses, and their minister to preach a sermon; and if no minister can attend, that the members meet and spend the days in Thanksgiving, prayer, and praises to the blessings of civil and religious liberty.

This Association offer their tribute of respect to the memory of one of the watchmen of Zion, the Rev. G. W. King. Will not the Churches lament their loss and cry for help, while they record the death of another faithful labourer in the Lord's vineyard—who was a devoted Christian, and though not a distinguished orator, was an able advocate of the great doctrines of Grace? In his death his flock lost a pious and exemplary shepherd, and Christianity a zealous champion and devout apostle.

Appointed brethren Robert Collins, Thigpen, Martin, Coaker, Walker and Harvey delegates to the Baptist Convention.

Agreed that the next Association be held at Hepsiba meeting house, Lawrence county.

Appointed brother S. Coaker to preach the Introductory Sermon, and in case of failure F. Walker.

Received contributions from the Churches to purchase the Baptist Confession of Faith, and appointed Brother D. Collins, agent for that business.

Ordered that brethren Robertson receive ten dollars, Chambers, four dollars; and Collins, Martin, Powell, Coaker, Harvey and Walker, receive each, six dollars, for their travelling expences, as messengers to corresponding Associations.

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Resolved, that the thanks of this Association be offered to the inhabitants of this settlement for their hospitality.

Appointed brother A. G. Moore to superintend the printing and distribution of these Minutes; and,

Ordered, that he draw on the Treasury for a sufficient sum to pay for the printing, &c. and that he receive one dollar per day, and his expences defrayed for his services.

Resolved, that there be a sufficient number of copies of these Minutes printed so that each Church in the corresponding Association shall receive one.

After a very feeling address and prayer by the Moderator, the Association was commended to the grace of God, and adjourned.

Signed by order of this Association.

DAVIS COLLINS, Moderator.

A. G. MOORE, Clerk.

CIRCULAR LETTER.

THE Ministers and Messengers composing the Pearl River Baptist Association, convened at Hebron on Saturday before the second Sabbath in September, eighteen hundred and twenty five—To those whom they represent, Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

Through the all abounding Grace of God, we have been again blessed with another annual interview, and if we had no other reason to bless his name, his preserving mercy calls aloud for our devout gratitude. At our last meeting we knew not that those blessings would be vouchsafed to us at the appointed time; but, trusting in the mercy of God, we proposed to address you on the "*Union of the Churches*;" and consequently we now bring the subject before you. The nature of this Union—its advantages—the means of promoting it—and the causes which might interrupt it, are so familiar to your understanding, that we hardly need mention them; and of course nothing very interesting can be expected to be said on the subject in this address. We will give a *definition* of union, and make some remarks on the *nature* of it. A union is, a combination of several individuals in one. Now this combination may be of parts, making an integral whole; or of distinct beings, making a collective whole. The one is essentially inherent in the nature of the things to which it belongs; and can

not be dissolved without destroying the essential attributes of its subject. Such is the union of the Trinity; and such the union of the soul and body. The other is a secondary essential mode, derived either from the primary essential attributes of the thing in its combined state, or from the primary essential attributes of the component parts. Such is the union of individual Churches; and such the combination of the churches in an association. It is indispensably necessary to union, that there be both *union* and *plurality*. Thus the unity of the Godhead consists of three distinct persons, which is but one God. The union of a congregational church, may have an indefinite number of distinct individual members, composing one distinct individual church.

Now to particularize the advantages of union as it exists in combinations of a civil, moral and religious nature, would be needless; because there is a general similarity in these. We will therefore briefly illustrate it in a *family union*, which may serve as a specimen of the whole; for it will require no great force of thought to make an application of it to all other combinations.

All families are united by bonds which cannot be broken, because they are the constituent parts of the family compact. And the advantages thence derived are various and great, and depend much on that diligence and willingness which the several members of a family observe in the discharge of their several duties towards each other, and the fulfilment of their several offices of social life in family capacity. The cords of love which unite families, are of the most exquisite sensibility. And almost every act of the individual members of a family, and almost every external occurrence in which the family or any member thereof is in any degree interested, will have either a happy or unhappy effect on the peace of the family, according to the character of the transaction. Therefore it is, that besides the means of happiness in which the whole family possess a common share, each member has other sources of happiness, derived by participation from the prosperity and welfare of the other members of the family. And on the other hand, there are advantages which, from union accrue to families. By it a family is enabled to support under the dispensation of adverse providences. Sympathy is a sensible and pleasing relief in distress, and each member of a family while suffering under an individual calamity, feels that he has, as it were, the fortitude of the whole to support him.

These remarks will apply with greater or less force to bodies corporate and politick—congregational churches—as-sociations—moral and religious societies, &c. &c.

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observations, we will now speak more particularly of *Christian Union*. And, as all Christian union depends, first, on the union of the *Trinity*, and second, on the union of *Divinity* and *humanity*, we will take a general view of these subjects before we proceed further.

There are mysteries which cannot be explained, for they cannot be comprehended. But they are nevertheless true.—Such is the trinity and unity of the Godhead. But as this, and other truths of a similar character, are clearly revealed by Him, who cannot lie, we should rest our faith on the immutable basis of his inviolable veracity, and humbly adore that transcendent wisdom which so far exceeds our conception. And the incapacity of our minds to comprehend infinite truths, should not weaken our belief in them.

The unity of the Godhead is *essential, immutable, eternal*, and exists by natural and eternal necessity. It is therefore *absolutely impossible* that it should not be a triune Godhead. Because whatever belongs to God in his *essential* character, belongs to him of necessity. Hence our Lord said “Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me.”—(John 14, 1.) Again, (v. 11.) “Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me.” But it is needless to multiply proofs of that of which you entertain no doubt; for we suppose that if Christ had not expressly declared his divinity, you would believe him for his very work’s sake.

The Holy Spirit of God, also, is God; and, indivisibly united with the Godhead. Scriptural proofs of this crowd themselves upon us: But if the Holy spirit hath wrought in you the work of sanctification, we need only appeal to your own experience, and ask if any power, short of the power of God, could have changed your hearts—could have made you *new creatures*? For if the *first born amongst many brethren—the first begotten of the Father* was conceived by the Holy Ghost, (Mat. 1. Luke 2.) so also we are *begotten again to a lively hope* by the power of the Spirit of God:—else we are bastards and not sons. “God is a Spirit.” The Spirit of God must therefore be every way commensurate with God.—Hereby we plainly see that the union of the trinity is an *indissoluble, essential and eternal* union.

Having proved the union of the trinity, it is not necessary to enter extensively into the proof of the union of Divinity and humanity; for the most confirmed infidel was never known to doubt the human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. But let us by a course of reasoning prove that the divine and human natures were united before sin entered into the world. And this we will do by an argument which we think sufficient to silence the cavils of every candid disputant. We shall not paraphrase,

but bring it as concisely into view as possible:—Immediately on the fall of man, *human nature* became *sinful*. Now, therefore, the *divine* and *human* natures must have been united previous to this event, otherwise the *human nature* of Christ must have been a *sinful nature*; a nature which would not only be absurd and preposterous, but would be the very climax of blasphemy. But if Christ's *human nature* was pure, which it must have been, else he had *own sin*, then the *divine* and *human natures* must have been united before man's original apostacy from God.

But we will come to the *union* of Christ, and those who were ordained to be his wife, to prove the union of Christ and his Church. This union is much of the same nature of those of which we have just been speaking. And although it is a great mystery, and exceeds our comprehension, yet it is too plainly declared in the *Scriptures* of God, for us to doubt the truth of it, that there is a *substantial union* between Christ and his Church. The general tenor of the *Scriptures* goes to shew that Christ is in every member of his Church, and that every member of his Church is in him: This is the design of many parables, which will admit of no other explanation; and in language which is incapable of misconstruction. There is no denying or evading this, without characterizing the *Holy Scriptures* with a style of the most studied ambiguity.—Paul's first Epistle to the *Church of God*, at Corinth, is addressed "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus."

The Epistle to the *Ephesians* is in like manner directed to "the faithful in Christ Jesus." The Church at Philippi is called "the Saints in Christ Jesus." The apostle uses the same language to the *Colossians*, calling them "Saints and faithful brethren in Christ." The first Epistle to the *Thessalonians* is addressed "to the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ." The second Epistle to the *Thessalonians* is in the same style. These all shew that the Church is in Christ: and indeed there is no promise made to any who are not in him, for all the promises are in Him yea, and Amen, to the glory of God by the Church. If the Church were not in Christ, what meaning could we affix to such passages of sacred writing as the following:—"Who hath chosen us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."—"According as he hath chosen us in Him, that we should be Holy and without blame before Him in love."—"In whom we have redemption."—"That he might gather together to one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him in whom also we have obtained an inheritance."—"In whom also, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

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These passages are all selected from the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: and it would be a work of some labour to enumerate all the passages of similar construction in the New Testament? Besides, it would swell this letter to a volume without a correspondent advantage. But our Saviour has declared it most emphatically in the fourteenth chapter of John. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you." This puts the matter out of debate. Further proof would be needless, and questions ridiculous.

Let us now speak something of union in individual congregational Churches. And this involves a very important consideration. The essence of this union is *love to God through Christ, and love to one another for Christ's sake*. This is that lovely charity which abideth for ever. Behold (saith the Psalmist) how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. He compares it to the precious ointment wherewith Aaron, the high priest, was sanctified; which was typical of the oil of gladness with which our great spiritual high priest was anointed above his fellows. This is also an ever living union, and is thence compared to the dew of Hermon, and the dew that descended on the mountains of Zion, where the Lord commanded the blessing, *even life for evermore*. The apostle John makes it the test of the believer's new life, saying, "And we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Who can contemplate, without holy admiration, this sublime union, by which the thousands of God's elect are united in fellowship with God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ! This union will last so long as the divine attributes of *love, power and truth* shall remain perfect with God. And believers in the Lord Jesus Christ will assemble together in congregational churches until the world's end. For the bonds of charity will draw them together, to speak of the good things of God—to pray with and for one another—to attend on the ministry—to set in order the things that are wanting—and to commemorate the death and sufferings of our Lord; until he shall come the second time, without sin, unto salvation. But lest we be tedious,—

Let us proceed to notice the union of churches in an associational connexion.

Do any suspect the lawfulness of churches assembling by their delegates for the purposes for which we usually associate? Let them remember that the love which united the primitive christians filled them with zeal for each other's prosperity, and anxious solicitude to know of their state. And churches as well as individual christians often reminded each other of

their faithful and unfeigned love. The churches of Asia sent their holy salutation to the Corinthian church, in Paul's first letter, (1. Cor. 16. 19.) The apostles and preachers generally in their epistles were moved by the Holy Ghost to send their fervent benedictions. Besides the many afflictions incident to Paul's apostleship, he had on him *daily* the care of all the churches. (2. Cor. 11. 28.) Paul sent Tychicus to the Ephesian church, that they might know the affairs of the brethren at Rome, (Eph. 6. 21. 22.) Paul sent Epaphroditus to the Philippian church, that they might rejoice when they saw him, and that the apostle himself might be the less sorrowful. He charged the Philippians to receive him with all gladness. And such meetings were to be held in reputation. He also trusted to send Timotheus that he might receive comfort when he should know the state of the Philippian church. Is it not very credible that if these primitive churches had not existed in an age of persecution they would have adopted some regular method of learning each others state? The great anxiety so often manifested by them for the welfare and prosperity of the churches in general, warrants the belief that they would have fallen upon measures to ascertain those things in which they had so deep an interest. And shall we, so far abuse the great blessings of civil and religious liberty, which our God has been pleased to bestow upon us, as to lie down in stupid indifference about the affairs of Christ's kingdom on earth? But brethren, we need not fear. The ardent desires of believing Christians to know what the Lord is doing in Zion, furnishes a security which will not fail. The Lord hath declared that when two or three are gathered together in his name, that He is in the midst of them. And we have much reason to believe that the Divine presence has often been sensibly felt at our assemblies. The wonderful effusion of the Holy Spirit took place at a time when the disciples were all with one accord in one place. And we might appeal to almost every member of our own denomination; as well as to those of every other denomination, who acknowledge the truth of experimental religion, to say, if it is not common for the influences of the Holy Spirit to be more visibly manifested at times when the members of the multitude are united at a throne of grace. He from whom the Lord was pleased to infuse extraordinary measures of the spirit of wisdom, has said, that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. Thus by the association of a great number of churches, the wisdom and energies of the whole are collected to a point, and by means of this combination may be exercised to better effect, and with less danger of error. And this promotes the

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harmony and the purity of churches, whereby the declarative glory of God is advanced.

We acknowledge, however, that associations should never overleap the great barrier which is placed as their ultimate limits.

To advise, instruct, and admonish is the utmost of their privileges. There are no powers vested in them, and if they assume any, they exceed the design of their institution—create distrust—interrupt the harmony of the churches and are verging towards anti christianism. Such combinations had better be dissolved than to injure the cause of Christ by exercising authority over churches; or by interfering with the rights of individual members, to invade the liberty, or infringe the independence of churches, which are the highest judicatory tribunals of an ecclesiastical nature on earth. If an association cannot fellowship the conduct of a church connected with it, such association would do better to withdraw peaceably from such church, than to attempt to force it within the sphere of its admonitions.

We will conclude this address with a seasonable exhortation.

Every association—every congregational church—every minister of the Gospel, and every individual member of the church, should use every means in their power to promote and perpetuate harmony and union throughout the whole church of God; and particularly amongst those with whom they are more closely connected by social obligations. They should industriously avoid any thing that might have a tendency to interrupt it. Discord is one of the greatest evils incident to churches or communities: if, therefore, we should “abstain from every appearance of evil,” is it not evident that we should subject all our measures to more than ordinary scrutiny, when there is the least appearance of the love and harmony of the brotherhood’s being thereby affected. That peace and harmony which now blesses the churches of this association, is a sufficient proof that we are not devoid of brotherly love. But that coldness and barrenness which so generally prevails amongst us, demonstrates that the love of the brethren has waxed too cold.

Dear Brethren, bear with us for we are jealous over you with a Godly jealousy. To what cause shall we attribute the present alarming lethargy which paralyses the members of Christ’s body? Let every one make this solemn inquiry,—Do I provoke the Lord to jealousy? If we make our liberty a stumbling block to them that are weak, by indulging in things lawful, but which are not expedient, we justly provoke the Lord and his church to jealousy: we cause divisions and

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offences, and such the primitive Christians were charged to avoid. For when in things which may be lawful and yet are not expedient, we sin against the brethren, by wounding their weak consciences, we sin against Christ. We abuse the spiritual law of liberty by which we were made free from the law of sin and death. We become the authors of offences, and we know that a terrible woe is denounced against those by whom offences shall come. Instead of pulling together as a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot we leave the king's highway to crop the flowers; or, in other words, to catch the alluring vanities of this world; such as worldly profit, worldly honors, and worldly wisdom. It is more profit to shield the tender conscience from a needless wound, than it is to gain the whole world. Let us leave worldly honors to be enjoyed by worldly men; let us despise them and seek only after the honors of God. Let us aspire after no other knowledge ourselves; and know nothing of our brethren saving Christ and him crucified. Are there any weak brethren among us? The only true charity, the only Christian benevolence, is to deprive ourselves of every temporal consideration rather than give those little things any cause of offence.—Is thy brother offended through thy ignorance? And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? Let us not despise the cross of Christ, but daily take it up and follow him through evil report as well as good; rejoicing that we are accounted worthy to bear it. How shall we sacrifice to the Lord of that which costs us nothing? It is of our first fruits; of our best and dearest temporal interests that we must offer, if we expect our sacrifices to be acceptable to God.—And it is by these sacrifices that we shall be able to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Let every heart be daily engaged in prayer to God, that brotherly love may continue and abound.

And now, unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory for ever and ever.—AMEN.

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Earl Limes

1826-1827

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